

DOT HS-801 958

**PASSIVE VS. ACTIVE SAFETY BELT SYSTEMS
IN VOLKSWAGEN RABBITS:
A COMPARISON OF OWNER USE HABITS
AND ATTITUDES**

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16. Abstract The overall objective of this research is to measure usage of, and attitudes toward, the passive restraint system, compared with the active restraint system on 1975 model year Volkswagen Rabbits. Methods used to carry out the research include: Interviews with two samples of VW Rabbit owners-- those who purchased a Rabbit with the passive system and those who purchased a Rabbit with the active system. Name and address lists of purchasers of both systems were furnished by Volkswagen of America, Inc. Interviewing was conducted in two phases. The first phase of interviews was conducted by telephone with a follow-up mail questionnaire to purchasers who could not be contacted by telephone. The second phase of interviews, which utilized only mail questionnaires, measured safety belt usage after purchasers had owned their Rabbits for eleven months or longer. Results show that belt usage was about 80 percent in cars sold with passive belts and operating interlock systems after almost one year of ownership. Further research will be required to ascertain how effective the passive restraint system might be if installed in domestic vehicles, particularly those in the higher weight classes.					
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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Volkswagen's 1975 Rabbit hatchback offered a unique opportunity to study two different types of vehicle restraint systems. In January and February, 1975, most custom and deluxe Rabbits sold were equipped with a passive restraint system -- one that requires no buckling and unbuckling of the safety belt. Other VW Rabbits, mainly standard models, were equipped with an active restraint system -- one that requires that the belt be buckled and unbuckled each time the car is used. Most people who purchased a Rabbit in early 1975 had to take one with a passive restraint system unless, of course, they wanted to place a special order for the standard model.

The passive restraint system consists of an over-the-shoulder belt, controlled by an emergency-locking, inertia reel retractor, plus a foam-padded knee pad below the dashboard to provide lower body restraint in the event of sudden deceleration. The latter feature takes the place of a lap belt. The system is activated by opening the car door and sliding into the seat. As the door swings shut, the automatic retractor takes up slack in the shoulder belt on a retractor built into the seat.

The active restraint system consists of a combination lap belt and shoulder harness, a sequential light-and-buzzer warning system, and a starter-interlock. This sequential system requires that the user fasten the belt after the front seat has been occupied. The starter-interlock feature prevents the engine from starting unless the logic circuit is "satisfied" that the front belts are fastened when the corresponding seat positions are occupied. Thus, the active system, unlike the passive system, requires that the belt be fastened and unfastened each time the car is used.

The basic objective of this research is to measure usage of, and attitudes toward, the passive restraint system, compared with the active restraint system in Volkswagen Rabbits.

The research was conducted among Rabbit owners through the use of name-and-address lists of owners of both systems furnished by Volkswagen of America, Inc. Most of the owners purchased their Rabbit in January or February, 1975. We originally intended to do all the interviewing by telephone, but later extended this to include a mail survey because many of the owners had unlisted telephone numbers. Interviewing was conducted in two waves. Data from the first wave of interviews indicated that the average length of ownership of the passive system was 4.3 months. In order to allow owners more time to gain experience with the restraint systems and to make the data more comparable with respect to length of ownership, a follow-up study, using mail questionnaires, was conducted in December, 1975.

Following are the numbers of cases (telephone and mail interviews combined) and the interviewing periods for the two waves:

	<u>Passive</u>	<u>Active</u>
<u>First Wave</u>		
Cases	2,196	561
Response dates	4/23/75- 7/14/75	6/24/75- 8/18/75
<u>Second Wave</u>		
Cases	366	169
Response dates	1/5/76- 2/6/76	1/5/76- 2/6/76

In the report that follows, percentages read down where percent signs appear in the column headings, and percentages read across where percent signs appear in the left-hand column.

In a few cases, percentages may not add exactly to the total or subtotal shown because of computer handling of the rounding.

Copies of the detailed computer printouts have been furnished separately to NHTSA.

Copies of the telephone questionnaires, for owners of both passive and active systems, for both waves of interviewing, are appended.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this research indicate that, among recent purchasers of the Volkswagen Rabbit, owners of the passive restraint system have higher use rates and more favorable overall attitudes than owners of the active restraint system.

<u>Percent of drivers who say:</u>	System Owned	
	Passive	Active
Wear safety belt (correctly) "almost always" ^{1/}	79%	50%
General impression of safety belt is "favorable"	83%	67%

The relatively high usage rate for owners of the passive restraint system does not appear to be related to a greater predisposition on their part than of owners of the active system to wear safety belts. When asked about their use of safety belts in a car other than the Rabbit, owners of the passive system are no more inclined than owners of the active system to report that they "almost always" wear a safety belt.

In all probability, the main explanation for the difference in usage between the two systems lies in the defeat of the interlock.

Only 18% of passive system owners, but 82% of active system owners, say the interlock in their car has been defeated. (Of the 82% of active owners who report this, about two-thirds say the interlock was defeated when they got the car, and one-third say it was defeated later.)

Rabbit owners who say that the interlock in their car is still operative are much more likely to report wearing the belt than are those who say that the interlock system has been disconnected.

Percentages of owners in the relevant groups who report that they wear the safety belt "almost always."

	VW Rabbit	
	Passive System	Active System
Interlock now operative	98%	70%
Interlock disconnected	51%	53%

^{1/} Average length of ownership: 11 months.

The survey findings suggest several reasons why the interlock system is more often defeated on Rabbits with the active restraint system than on Rabbits with the passive restraint system.

One possible reason is the ease of defeating the interlock. In the case of the active system, this requires only pulling the plug. In the case of the passive system, survey data indicate (and our notes from Volkswagen confirm) that cutting or otherwise disconnecting the wires at the door is necessary to defeat the system.

Another factor in the lesser tendency to defeat the passive system than the active probably lies in the comfort/convenience aspects of the two systems.

Owners of the passive system who say they had a choice of systems most often say they were attracted by the system's ease or convenience of use. (Owners of the active system who had a choice most often say they rejected the passive system because of its additional cost.)

In an overall rating, 73% of passive system owners rate their safety belt "comfortable to wear," compared with 45% of active system owners who say this.

Finally, while there is no direct evidence from the research findings, it's quite possible that having purchased a Rabbit that offered as optional equipment a novel and unique restraint system, owners of the passive system might well have felt a commitment to use the belts and leave the interlock intact.

Conclusions indicate that:

1. Based on the evidence to date, the passive restraint system with an operative starter-interlock is highly effective as a use-inducing system on VW Rabbits.
2. Most users of the passive system report that the over-the-shoulder belt is comfortable to wear and easy to use.
3. A major criticism of the passive system reported by users is the difficulty they have with opening the door and getting into or get out of the car. Also, after eleven months of use, many owners have suggestions for improving the system.
4. Further research is needed to ascertain how effective the passive system might be if installed in domestic vehicles, particularly vehicles in the higher weight classes.

DETAILED FINDINGS

Belt Usage

On the issue of wearing the belt and wearing it properly, owners of Rabbits with passive systems report markedly greater usage than owners of Rabbits with active systems. As Figure 1 shows, the usage rate for passive owners is more than one and a half times that for active owners. For each system, usage rates are about at the same percentage level when average length of ownership is 4.3 months or less as when the average length of ownership is 11.0 months or more. These findings hold true for both studies (waves of interviewing).

Figure 1

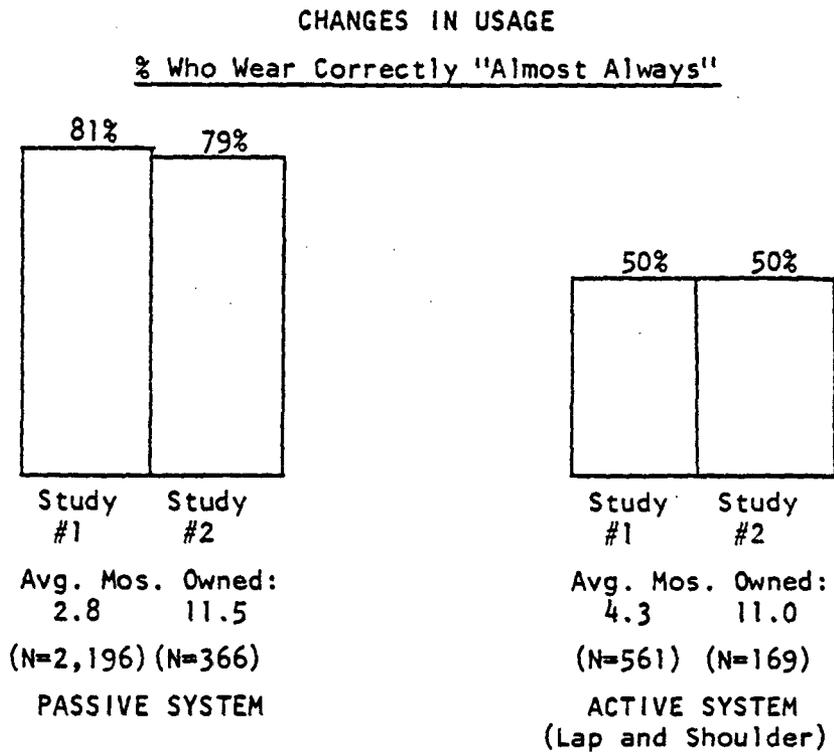
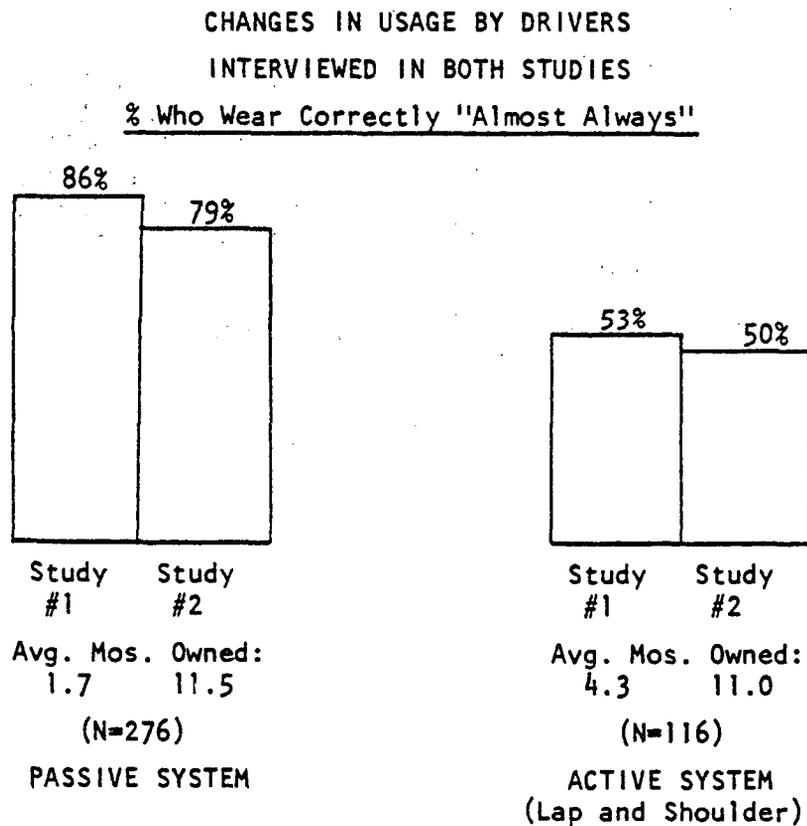


Figure 2 shows reported belt usage for a matched sample of Rabbit owners, i.e., respondents who were interviewed in both studies. Here again, the data show belt usage to be considerably greater for passive owners than for active owners regardless of how long the car was owned. For both systems, the reported usage rates are lower in Study #2 than in Study #1. The percentage differences of 86% vs. 79% for passive owners and 53% vs. 50% for active owners, however, are not statistically significant when measured on the relatively small samples.

Figure 2



Relatively few Rabbit owners report that they wear the belt improperly. Among owners of the passive system, only 8% say that they usually wear the belt under the arm. Among owners of the active system, 5% report under-arm use and 1% say that they usually wear it behind the back.

115
20
—
1

Belt Usage in Rabbit vs. Other Car

As shown in Figure 3 opposite, owners of Rabbits with passive systems are no more likely than owners with active systems to report that they "almost always" wear safety belts when they drive another car. Among owners of the passive system, 87% report that they "almost always" wear the belt when driving the Rabbit, while only 37% say they usually wear the belt when driving a car other than the Rabbit. This finding indicates that owners of the passive system are not unique with respect to safety belt usage, i.e., they appear to be no more safety belt minded than are owners of the active system.

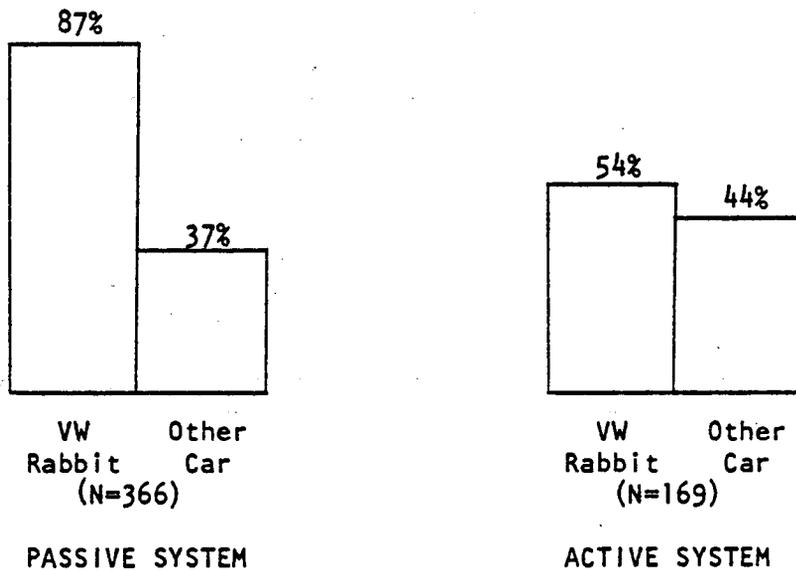
The findings in Figure 3 are reinforced by the findings in Figure 4. Among owners of the passive system who say that they "almost never" wear a safety belt in another car, 78% report wearing the belt "almost always" in the Rabbit. Here again, it is evident that the high level of belt usage in the Rabbit with the passive system is the result of factors other than a predisposition on the part of passive owners to wear safety belts.

The findings of Figures 3 and 4 are all from the second study.

Figure 3

USAGE IN RABBIT VS. OTHER CAR DRIVEN

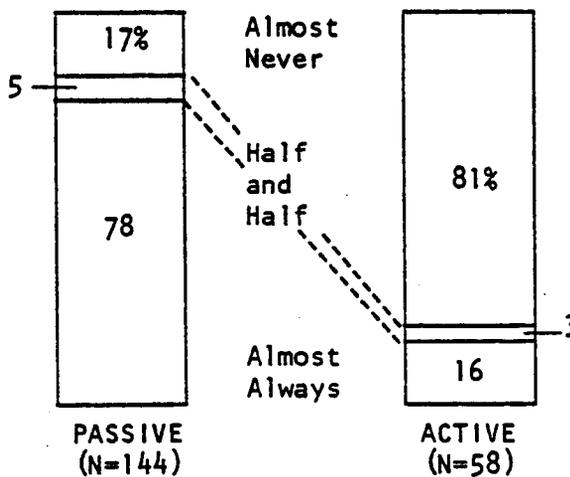
% Who Wear "Almost Always"



(Study #2)

Figure 4

USAGE IN RABBIT BY THOSE WHO "ALMOST NEVER" WEAR SAFETY BELT IN OTHER CAR



(Study #2)

Defeating the System

The main reason for the difference in safety belt usage between owners of Rabbits with the passive system and those with the active system lies in the defeat of the interlock.

Owners of the passive system were asked:

"Has the interlock system in your V.W. Rabbit been defeated or disconnected so that you can start the engine without having the safety belt buckled?"

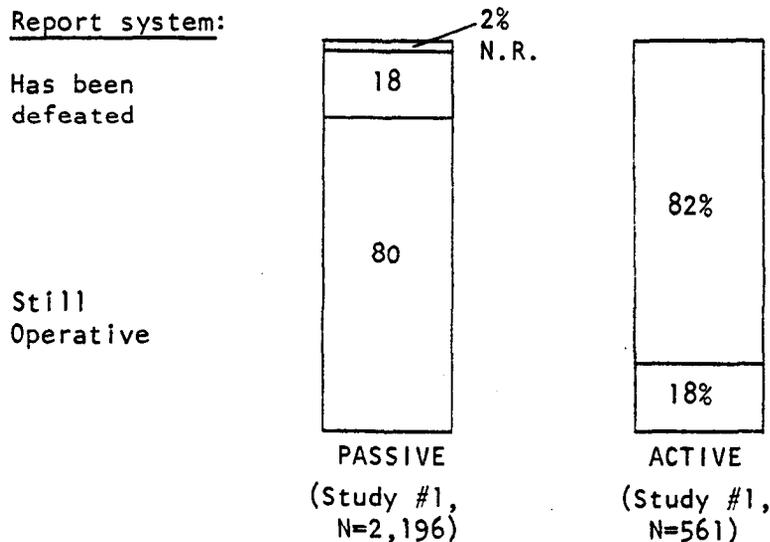
Owners of the active system were asked:

"At the present time, do you have to fasten the safety belt in order to start the engine, or can you start the engine without fastening the safety belt?"

As shown in Figure 5, only 18% of passive system owners, but 82% of active system owners, say the interlock in their car has been defeated.

Figure 5

DEFEAT OF INTERLOCK SYSTEM AT TIME OF INTERVIEW



Note: The findings above are from Study #1. At that time the duration of car ownership was 2.8 months for the passive system and 4.3 months for the active system. In Study #1, of the 82% of active owners who report that the interlock in their car has been defeated, about two-thirds say it was defeated when they got the car, and one-third say it was defeated later.

In Study #2, when the duration of car ownership for the passive system was 11.5 months, 86% of the passive owners report that the safety belt in their Rabbit is still attached to the door.

As previously mentioned, relatively few owners (18%) of the passive restraint system report that it has been defeated. These owners were asked to tell how the interlock system in their Rabbit was defeated. The answers:

Figure 6

	<u>Passive Owners</u> <u>(N=2,196)</u>
Those who report interlock has been defeated	<u>18%</u>
Dealer did it	3%
Pulled the plug	2
Cut the wires	2
Shorted the wires	2
Other	2
Don't know	7

On a different point, half (52%) of the owners of active systems report that the warning light and buzzer have been disconnected in their Rabbit. (Study #1.)

Owners who say their warning system has been defeated most commonly report this was done by pulling the plug. Many others don't know how the system was defeated, indicating that someone else did it.

Figure 7

	<u>Active Owners (N=561)</u>
Those who report warning system has been defeated	<u>52%</u>
Pulled plug	34%
Cut wires	*
Other	3
Don't know	14

* Less than ½%.

The owner himself (usually the man of the house) and the dealer are the ones who most commonly defeated the warning system. Many respondents don't know who defeated the system.

Figure 8

	<u>Active Owners (N=561)</u>
Those who report warning system has been defeated	<u>52%</u>
Respondent did it	20%
Dealer	17
Family member	4
Friend	2
Mechanic	1
Other	1
Don't know who did it	6

Circumventing the System

One Rabbit owner in five (21%) of those who have an active safety belt system reports that he sometimes circumvents the system. (Study #1.)

Figure 9

	<u>Number of Cases</u>	<u>Percent of Active Owners Who Circumvent the System</u>
Total	561	21%
<u>Months owned</u>		
Four	381	19%
Five	173	26%
<u>Mileage on VW</u>		
Under 3,000	123	20%
3,000 - 6,999	269	21%
7,000 or over	162	23%
Interlock now	99	33%
No interlock	460	19%

The question wording for the above:

"Do you ever circumvent the safety belt system so that you don't have to fasten the belt? By circumvent, we mean 'fooling' the system such as by fastening the combination lap and shoulder belt behind you, hooking the belt to the door handle, etc."

The factor of circumvention, in addition to defeating of the system, is one more reason why usage is lower among owners of the active system than among owners of the passive.

Moreover, circumventing the system is often reported as habitual.

Figure 10

	<u>Active Owners (N=561)</u>
Those who report circumventing the system	<u>21%</u>
Almost always	11%
More than half the time	2
Less than half the time	6
Almost never	3

The most common methods of circumventing the system are buckling the belt behind the seat or behind the person's back.

Figure 11

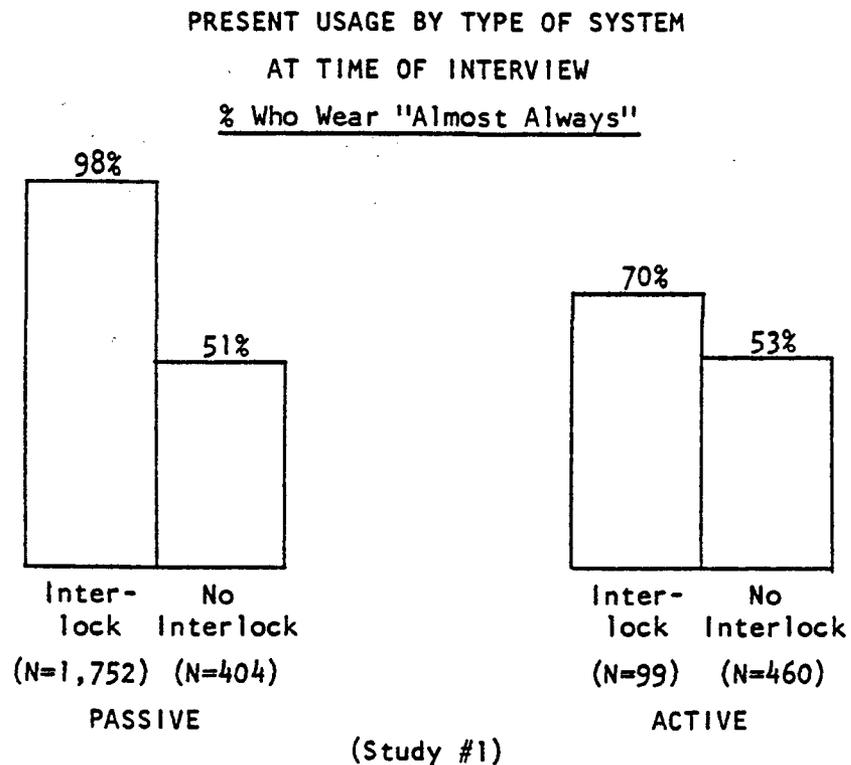
	<u>Active Owners</u> <u>(N=561)</u>
Those who report circumventing the system	<u>21%</u>
Buckle belt behind seat	9%
Buckle belt behind back	8
Start car without sitting on seat	1
Don't buckle belt but sit on or tuck into seat	1
Hook belt onto door	*
Connect passenger's belt to driver's buckle	*
Not reported	1

* Less than ½%.

Usage: Interlock vs. No Interlock

Rabbit owners who report that the interlock in their car is still operative are much more likely to say that they wear their safety belt "almost always" than are those who report that the interlock has been defeated. As shown in Figure 12, this is true for both owners of the passive system and for owners of the active system. Note also that passive owners who report the interlock defeated show about the same level of usage as do active owners who report the interlock defeated.

Figure 12



Rate of Defeat by Type of System --
VW Rabbits with Active Restraint System

Among VW Rabbits with the active restraint system, vehicles delivered with the starter-interlock experienced a much higher defeat rate than ones delivered with a continuous light and buzzer. Among owners who purchased their Rabbit with a functioning interlock, only 39% report, some 4 months later, on average, that the interlock was still operative. By comparison, 71% of owners who purchased their Rabbit with a continuous light and buzzer report this system to be still operative after four months from time of delivery.

Figure 13

TYPE OF USE-INDUCING SYSTEM

	N =	When Car Delivered		
		<u>Interlock</u>	<u>Cont. Lt. & Buz.</u>	<u>No Warning System</u>
At time of interview	257	168	51	
		<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
Interlock	39%	0%	0%	
Cont. Lt. & Buz.	8	71	0	
No warning system	53	29	100	

ACTIVE SYSTEMS

(Study #1)

Usage by Type of System

Figure 14 shows the percentage of owners of Rabbits with the active system who report that they "almost always" wear the safety belt. The data compare usage rates by the type of system that was reported to be in the car at the time of interview. Usage is equally high for Rabbits with the interlock system and for those with a continuous light and buzzer. The six percentage point difference between the two systems is not statistically significant.

Figure 14

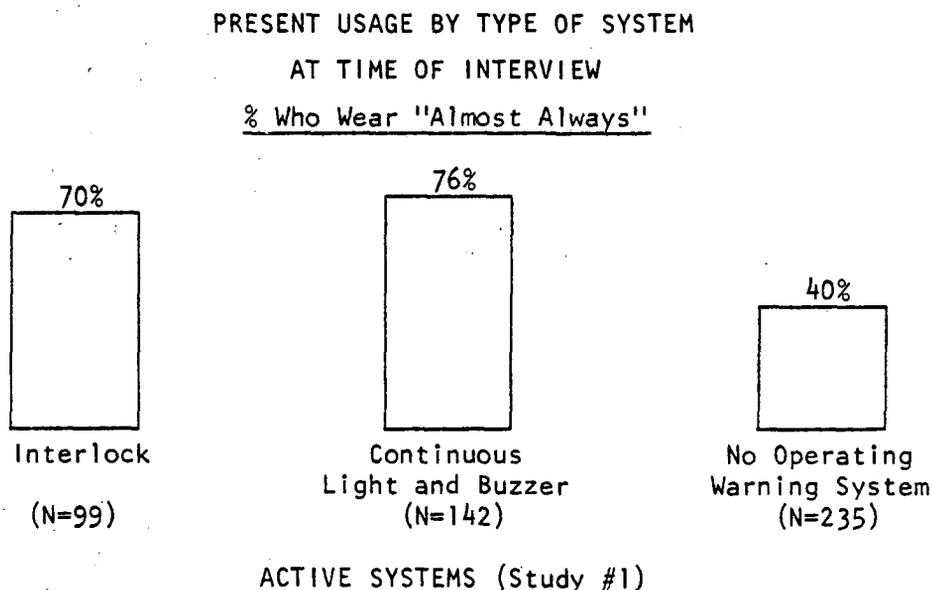
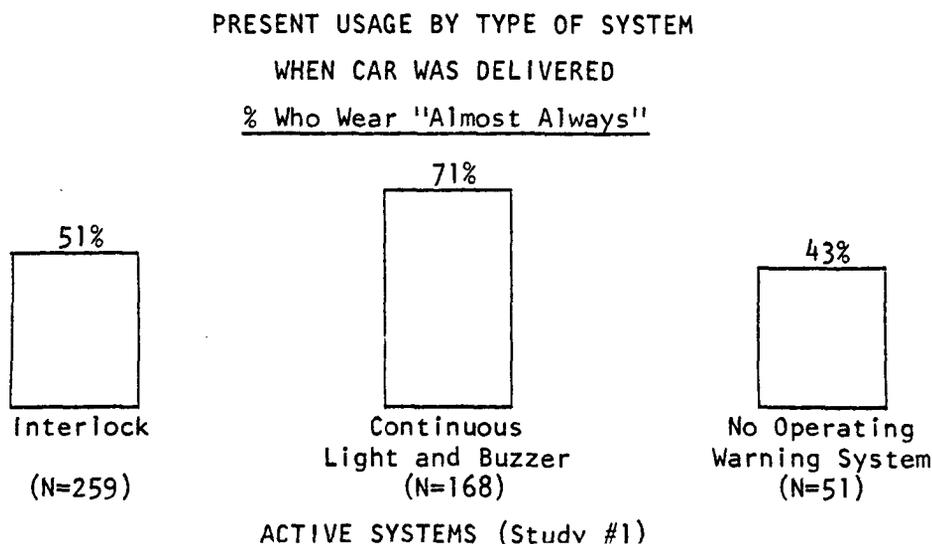


Figure 15 shows usage data by type of restraint system in the Rabbit at the time it was delivered to the owner. Reported usage for the interlock system is nineteen percentage points lower than reported usage for the interlock system in Figure 14 (51% vs. 70%). The difference in usage is accounted for by the high defeat rate of the interlock system between time of delivery and the time of interview. In the case of the continuous light and buzzer system, the usage rates are quite similar for the two time periods mainly because of the relatively low defeat rate.

Figure 15



Usage by Vehicle Characteristics

If we analyze the findings by factors related to the car itself (rather than the driver), we see that usage, for both passive and active systems, is much greater if the car has a functioning interlock system than if it does not. And, since owners of the passive system are much more likely than owners of the active system to report that their Rabbit has a functioning interlock (82% vs. 18%), this explains why belt usage is more widespread overall among passive owners than among active. (Study #1.)

Note that drivers who had a choice of system and got what they wanted are more likely to report regular usage than those who did not have a choice and may or may not have gotten the system they wanted. This seems to suggest that keeping open the option of system conduces to greater overall usage -- different people prefer different systems.

The following table provides the supporting data:

Figure 16

	<u>Number of Cases</u>		<u>Percent of Drivers Who Say They Wear Safety Belt "Almost Always"</u>	
	<u>Passive</u>	<u>Active</u>	<u>Passive</u>	<u>Active</u>
Total	2,196	561	89%	56%
Have interlock now	1,752	99	98%	70%
No interlock	404	460	51%	53%
Had choice of belt system	730	179	97%	62%
Did not	1,370	343	85%	55%
<u>Months owned Rabbit</u>				
One	126	None	86%	-
Two	885	None	89%	-
Three	684	None	92%	-
Four	210	381	89%	58%
Five	207	173	85%	53%
<u>Mileage on Rabbit</u>				
Under 3,000	898	123	91%	56%
3,000 - 6,999	1,044	269	89%	59%
7,000 or over	223	162	83%	52%

Usage by Driver Characteristics

If we examine the usage rates by personal characteristics of the drivers, the differences within the passive and active groups are not great, but on each line in the table below the usage is greater among passive owners than active. (Study #1.)

Figure 17

	<u>Number of Cases</u>		<u>Percent of Drivers Who Say They Wear Safety Belt "Almost Always"</u>	
	<u>Passive</u>	<u>Active</u>	<u>Passive</u>	<u>Active</u>
Men	1,424	353	89%	56%
Women	769	207	89%	57%
Under 40 years of age	1,449	409	91%	56%
40 or over	736	147	85%	60%
Under \$15,000 income	835	264	89%	51%
\$15,000 or over	1,205	233	90%	63%
Under 5'6"	528	121	86%	55%
5'6" - 5'11"	1,149	271	91%	55%
6' or over	506	161	90%	61%
Under 140 lbs.	618	153	90%	63%
140 - 179	929	222	88%	57%
180 - 199	370	94	89%	64%
200 or over	255	79	90%	39%

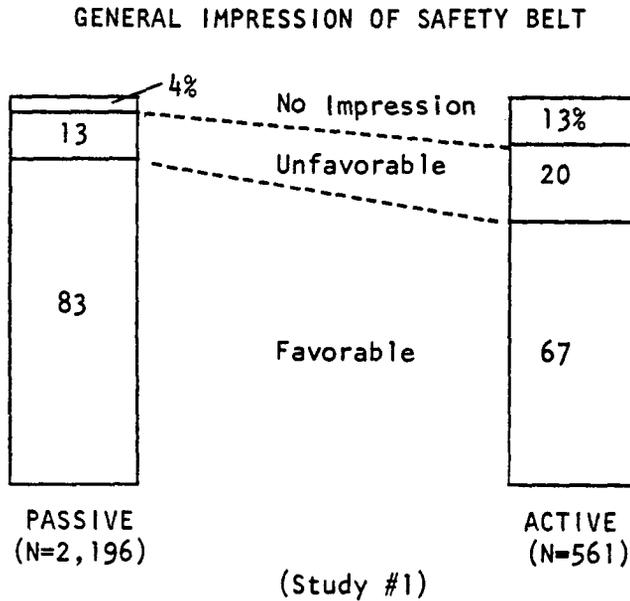
Overall Attitudes Toward Safety Belt

As with usage, owners of passive systems have more favorable attitudes than owners of active systems.

Early in the interview, respondents were asked:

"Would you describe your general impression of the safety belt in the VW Rabbit as favorable, or unfavorable, or don't you have an impression one way or the other?"

Figure 18



The attitude patterns, for passive vs. active owners, are similar to the usage patterns described in the preceding section.

The following table relates the two variables, attitudes and usage. Although it is impossible to say which is cause and which effect, the association is clear. For both passive and active owners, favorable attitudes are associated with safety belt usage.

Figure 19

<u>Wear Safety Belt:</u>	<u>Number of Cases</u>		<u>Percent Whose General Impression of Safety Belt is "Favorable"</u>	
	<u>Passive</u>	<u>Active</u>	<u>Passive</u>	<u>Active</u>
Almost always	1,954	316	89%	81%
Half and half	48	55	65%	73%
Almost never	189	184	32%	40%

Reasons for Choosing/Not Choosing Passive System

Consumer thinking on the advantages and disadvantages of the passive restraint system boils down to ease or convenience of use vs. cost. (Study #1.)

Following are the leading reasons given for choosing the passive belt system:

Figure 20

Owners of <u>passive</u> belt system who had a choice (N=730)	<u>100%</u>
Easy/convenient to use	73%
Forces one to use belt	14
Safer than conventional system	10
Wanted to try it/read about it	9
More comfortable	6
Offers greater freedom of movement	4
Like the knee pad	3

(Principal answers. Percentages add to more than 100 because of multiple answers.)

And here are the leading reasons for not choosing the passive restraint system, as given by owners of the active system:

Figure 21

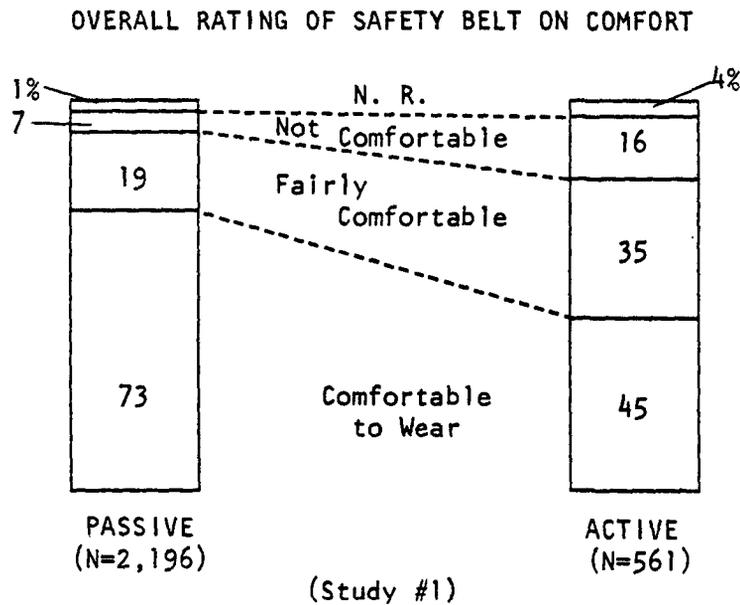
Owners of <u>active</u> belt system who had a choice (N=179)	<u>100%</u>
Too expensive/extra cost	47%
Dislike the knee pad	13
Inconvenient to use	7
Less safe than conventional	5
Too long a delivery time	5
Prefer conventional safety belt	3
Don't use safety belts	3
Decision made by another family member	3
Less comfortable	2

(Principal answers.)

Overall Comfort Ratings

In a summary rating of comfort, the Rabbit with the passive system out-scores that with the active system. (Study #1.)

Figure 22



Following are some interrelationships of comfort ratings and characteristics related to the car that seem to bear a meaningful relationship to usage:

Those who had a choice of safety belt systems when they bought their Rabbit give higher comfort ratings than those who had no choice. This pattern is true for both passive and active owners. The implication is that offering customers a choice of systems pays off in greater satisfaction and hence greater usage.

For owners of both passive and active systems, those whose car has an interlock, more often than those whose car does not, say the belt is comfortable to wear. This suggests that a comfortable belt system leads the owner to leave the interlock connected, which in turn leads to greater usage.

Owners who report using the safety belt almost always are much more likely than nonusers to say the belt is comfortable to wear. Again, we see an association between favorable attitudes and belt usage.

Comfort ratings show a decline with the length of time the car is owned, but the relationship is not a strong one.

Figure 23

	<u>Number of Cases</u>		<u>Percent Who Rate Belt "Comfortable to Wear"</u>	
	<u>Passive</u>	<u>Active</u>	<u>Passive</u>	<u>Active</u>
Total	2,196	561	73%	45%
Had choice of belt system	730	179	81%	54%
Did not	1,370	343	68%	41%
Have interlock now	1,752	99	77%	56%
No interlock	404	460	58%	43%
<u>Wear safety belt</u>				
Almost always	1,954	316	77%	56%
Half and half	48	55	62%	51%
Almost never	189	184	27%	25%
<u>Months owned</u>				
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3,000 - 6,999	1,044	269	73%	46%
7,000 or over	223	162	67%	48%

As far as personal characteristics are concerned, there appears to be little relationship between perceived comfort of the safety belt (either passive or active system) and sex, family income, or weight of the driver. On age, younger people appear somewhat more favorable than older people on the comfort issue, but the relationship is not strongly marked.

The passive belt system appears better adapted to meeting the comfort requirements of all body heights than the active system. Taller owners of the active system give higher comfort ratings than shorter owners.

Figure 24

	<u>Number of Cases</u>		<u>Percent Who Rate Belt "Comfortable to Wear"</u>	
	<u>Passive</u>	<u>Active</u>	<u>Passive</u>	<u>Active</u>
Total	2,196	561	73%	45%
Men	1,424	353	73%	47%
Women	769	207	72%	43%
Under 40 years of age	1,449	409	75%	47%
40 or over	736	147	68%	40%
Under \$15,000 income	835	264	72%	47%
\$15,000 or over	1,205	233	74%	45%
Under 5'6"	528	121	72%	37%
5'6" - 5'11"	1,149	271	73%	45%
6' or over	506	161	73%	53%
Under 140 lbs.	618	153	76%	42%
140 - 179	929	222	71%	50%
180 - 199	370	94	73%	41%
200 or over	255	79	71%	48%

Specific Comfort and Convenience Ratings

On each of seven specific comfort/convenience issues checked for both passive-system and active-system owners, majorities say "No problem." (Study #1.)

Among these seven issues, the percentage of "No problem" answers ranges from 90% to 75% for owners of passive systems, and from 86% to 57% for owners of active systems. The spread in the two cases is 15 versus 29 percentage points, respectively, indicating a greater variability of attitudes among owners of the active system.

On a number of issues, the favorable answers come more frequently from owners of the passive system than from owners of the active, though on other issues the margin of apparent differences is not meaningful.

Figure 25

(Percentages read across)	<u>No Problem</u>	<u>Minor</u>	<u>Bother- some</u>	<u>Serious</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
Belt causing jewelry or other items worn to be damaged, broken, or lost					
Passive	90%	5	1	1	3
Active	86%	4	1	0	9
Belt falling off the shoulder					
Passive	90%	5	2	1	2
Active	81%	7	3	*	9
Belt being hard on clothing -- may wrinkle, soil, cause rips or tears					
Passive	84%	9	2	2	3
Active	66%	18	6	2	8
Belt resting on or rubbing across face or neck					
Passive	81%	9	6	2	2
Active	58%	15	14	4	9
Belt exerting too much pressure on shoulder or chest					
Passive	81%	10	5	2	2
Active	61%	15	12	4	8
Belt chafing or rubbing across chest or other part of body					
Passive	77%	12	6	2	3
Active	62%	16	10	3	9

(continued ...)

(Figure 25 continued)

(Percentages read across)	<u>No Problem</u>	<u>Minor</u>	<u>Bother-some</u>	<u>Serious</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
Belt interfering when reaching for glove compartment or controls on dashboard					
Passive	75%	17	5	1	2
Active	57%	23	9	2	9

* Less than ½%.

Note: N (Passive) = 2,196
 N (Active) = 561

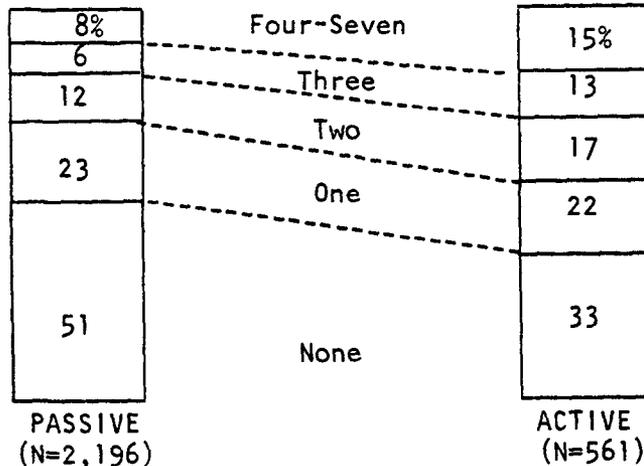
In order to look at the seven comfort/convenience issues in summary fashion and facilitate analysis by subgroups, we have computed a composite measure, the Comfort/Convenience Index.

For each of the seven issues, we considered a driver to be identifying a problem if he gave an answer of "Minor," "Bothersome," or "Serious." Each driver was then classified on a scale from 0 to 7 according to the number of comfort/convenience problems identified.

The following chart shows how owners of the passive and active systems divide up according to the Comfort/Convenience Index.

Figure 26

COMFORT/CONVENIENCE INDEX: NUMBER OF PROBLEMS NAMED



(Study #1)

Examining the Comfort/Convenience Index by characteristics of the car owned and of the driver throws some additional light on the relationships between this Index and safety belt usage.

For this analysis, it seems advisable to simplify the Index down to one percentage -- drivers who cite no comfort/convenience problems. Under this system, the higher the percentage shown, the more favorable the position on the scale (no dissatisfaction on any of the seven comfort/convenience issues covered).

Highlight results:

Satisfaction, as measured by the Comfort/Convenience Index, tends to drop the longer the Rabbit is owned. The same finding shows up when we look at mileage covered, but only for owners of the passive system. This drop in satisfaction might well hurt usage in time. Note (last item in table following) that, among owners of the passive system, wearing of the safety belt "almost always" is correlated with favorable attitudes on the Comfort/Convenience Index.

Having a choice between belt systems also correlates favorably with standing on the Comfort/Convenience Index, at least for owners of the passive system.

Again for owners of the passive system, drivers who have the interlock now score higher on the Index than drivers who have defeated the interlock. This suggests that a driver satisfied on the comfort/convenience issues will leave the interlock operational, which will tend to increase his usage of the safety belt.

As far as age, height and weight are concerned, the passive system seems to accommodate a range of driver types better than the active system. In the case of the active system, satisfaction is greater among older people than younger, taller than shorter, and heavier than lighter.

Figure 27

	<u>Number of Cases</u>		<u>Percent of Owners Citing No Problems</u>	
	<u>Passive</u>	<u>Active</u>	<u>Passive</u>	<u>Active</u>
Total	2,196	561	51%	33%
<u>Months owned</u>				
One	126	-	64%	-
Two	885	-	55%	-
Three	684	-	52%	-
Four	210	381	34%	37%
Five	207	173	36%	24%
<u>Mileage on Rabbit</u>				
Under 3,000	898	123	55%	34%
3,000 - 6,999	1,044	269	48%	32%
7,000 or over	223	162	42%	33%
<u>Had choice of belt system</u>				
Had choice of belt system	730	179	55%	33%
Did not	1,370	343	48%	33%
<u>Have interlock now</u>				
Have interlock now	1,752	99	53%	36%
No interlock	404	460	43%	32%
<u>Under 40 years of age</u>				
Under 40 years of age	1,449	409	50%	29%
40 or over	736	147	51%	41%
<u>Under 5'6"</u>				
Under 5'6"	528	121	47%	22%
5'6" - 5'11"	1,149	271	52%	32%
6' or over	506	161	52%	38%
<u>Under 140 lbs.</u>				
Under 140 lbs.	618	153	52%	24%
140 - 179	929	222	50%	34%
180 - 199	370	94	51%	35%
200 or over	255	79	48%	39%
<u>Wear safety belt</u>				
Almost always	1,954	316	53%	29%
Half and half	48	55	33%	35%
Almost never	189	184	33%	38%

In addition to the seven comfort/convenience issues reported above, where we obtained ratings from owners of both passive and of active systems, we covered seven issues that were asked only of passive or of active belt owners. These last issues included three for passive and four for active belt owners.

Of the three issues covered only for passive belt owners, the one regarding the knee panel scores about as high as the other favorably-regarded issues already reported for such owners. However, the belt's interfering with getting into and out of the car appears to be the greatest weakness of the passive belt system among all the issues tested.

In the case of active belt owners, the issues of fastening/buckling the belt and of belt retractor locking do not score any worse than the seven issues reported earlier. However, the last two items reported in the table below do score lower than any of the other issues reported and appear to be special problems of the active belt system. These issues are interference with getting into the back seat and accessibility of the belt.

Figure 28

(Percentages read across)	No Problem	Minor	Bother- some	Serious	No Opinion
<u>Owners of passive systems:</u>					
Padded knee panel under the dashboard	84%	9	4	2	1
Belt system interfering with opening door and getting <u>into car</u>	63%	23	9	3	2
Belt system interfering with opening door and getting <u>out of car</u>	62%	23	10	3	2
<u>Owners of active systems:</u>					
Fastening or buckling the belt	62%	15	12	3	8
Belt retractor locks when trying to fasten or buckle belt	58%	19	11	3	9
Belt interferes or makes it difficult for people getting into the back seat	50%	18	15	7	10
Accessibility of the belt -- being able to take hold of buckle, pull it out of the reel, and fasten it	44%	25	15	8	8

Malfunctions

The passive and the active belt systems in the VW Rabbit appear to be about equally reliable. Some 16% of passive belt owners and 13% of active belt owners report that they have experienced any malfunctions or mechanical problems with their car's interlock system. (Study #1.)

And the opinions divide fairly evenly as to whether the problems are minor, bothersome, or serious.

Figure 29

	<u>Passive</u> <u>(N=2,196)</u>	<u>Active</u> <u>(N=561)</u>
Those who report malfunctions	<u>16%</u>	<u>13%</u>
Minor	6%	4%
Bothersome	4	4
Serious	5	4
No opinion	1	*

* Less than ½%.

Drivers name a variety of malfunctions, with some concentration on fastening or buckling problems for passive system cars and belt locking in the retractor for active system cars.

Figure 30

	<u>Passive</u> <u>(N=2,196)</u>	<u>Active</u> <u>(N=561)</u>
Those who report malfunctions	<u>16%</u>	<u>13%</u>
Fastening or buckling problems ^{1/}	6%	1%
Car will not start even with the belt fastened	3	1
Malfunction (nonspecific)	3	*
Belt locks in retractor	1	6
Car will start without the belt fastened	1	*
Light/buzzer goes on even when belt is fastened	1	1
Other	1	3
Not reported	1	*

* Less than ½%.

^{1/} Some owners of the passive system say it is difficult to fasten belt to door after it has been unfastened for one reason or another.

Most commonly, the malfunction has been corrected by the dealer or remains uncorrected.

Figure 31

	<u>Passive</u> <u>(N=2,196)</u>	<u>Active</u> <u>(N=561)</u>
Those who report malfunctions	<u>16%</u>	<u>13%</u>
Corrected by:		
Dealer	5%	4%
Respondent	2	1
Family member	1	*
Mechanic, other than dealer's	*	*
Other	1	*
Problem has not been corrected	7	7
Not reported	1	*

* Less than ½%.

Instructions on Use of Safety Belt

About seven Rabbit owners in ten say they have received instructions on how their safety belt should be worn. (Study #1.) The percentage is about equally high for owners of the passive restraint system (74%) and for owners of the active restraint system (71%).

Most commonly, the dealer or salesman instructed the new owner. Next most usual is for the owner to study the instruction manual that comes with the car.

Figure 32

	<u>Passive (N=2,196)</u>	<u>Active (N=561)</u>
Those who say they have received instruction on proper way to wear safety belt	<u>74%</u>	<u>71%</u>
Instructed by:		
Dealer or salesman	55%	43%
Instruction manual	23	29
Family member	1	1
Friend	*	*
Other	1	*
Not instructed	26	29

* Less than ½%.

Rabbit Owners' Suggestions for Improving the Passive System

In the follow-up mail questionnaire (Study #2), the following question was asked of owners of Rabbits with the passive system:

"What suggestions do you have for improving the safety belt system in your V.W. Rabbit?"

More than half of the owners offered suggestions for improving the system or commented either favorably or unfavorably about their experiences with it. A complete listing of their responses is included in the Appendix section.

A summary of the main ideas or comments made about the passive system are presented below:

- Belt should be made to retract faster since it often gets caught in door latch when closing door
- Safety belt is uncomfortable to wear
- Difficult getting in and out of car
- Latch or spring lock on door should be stronger; breaks too easily
- Prefer a lap belt
- Belt frays and/or wears out seat

APPENDIX

51274
042175

OMB No. 04S73034
Expires Dec. 31, 1975

SAFETY BELT SURVEY - VW RABBIT
(Telephone Interview)

Phone Number:
(AREA CODE)

TIME ENDED: _____

TIME STARTED: _____

SEX OF RESPONDENT: 1 MALE 2 FEMALE

LENGTH OF INT: _____ (MIN.)

CITY: _____

Date: _____

STATE: _____

Interviewer: _____

"Hello, my name is _____, from Opinion Research Corporation, Princeton, New Jersey. We're conducting a survey on the Safety Belt System in the Volkswagen Rabbit."

Do you or does anyone in your household own a VW Rabbit that has an automatic or passive safety belt system for the front seats -- that is, a shoulder harness which is buckled to the door?

1 YES

2 NO

DISCONTINUE INTERVIEW

May I please speak to the main driver of this car, that is, the person in your household who drives it most often. IF MAIN DRIVER NOT HOME, FIND OUT WHEN HE/SHE IS EXPECTED IN AND CALL BACK AT THAT TIME. IF TWO DRIVE EQUALLY, OR NEARLY EQUALLY, YOU MAY INTERVIEW EITHER ONE.

1. Do you happen to recall the month and date on which you took delivery of the VW Rabbit?

MONTH _____

DATE _____

2a. About how many miles have you, yourself, driven the Rabbit? Just your best estimate.

- 1 UNDER 1,000
- 2 1,000 - 2,999
- 3 3,000 - 4,999
- 4 5,000 - 6,999
- 5 7,000 - 8,999
- 6 9,000 - 9,999
- 7 10,000 OR OVER
- 8 DON'T KNOW

2b. Some Rabbits have the automatic or passive safety belt system like the one in your car, while others have the one-piece combination lap and shoulder belt which requires buckling-up each time you get into the car. Were you able to choose between the two belt systems when you bought your Rabbit, or didn't you have a choice?

- 1 ABLE TO CHOOSE
- 2 HAD NO CHOICE
- 3 DON'T KNOW

IF "ABLE TO CHOOSE" ON Q. 2b, ASK:

2c. Why did you choose the passive belt system?

3. Would you describe your general impression of the safety belt in the VW Rabbit as favorable, or unfavorable, or don't you have an impression one way or the other?
- 1 FAVORABLE
2 UNFAVORABLE
3 NO IMPRESSION

4. On most trips where you do the driving in the Rabbit, would you say that you wear the safety belt almost always or almost never?
- 1 ALMOST ALWAYS (GO TO Q. 5)
2 ALMOST NEVER
3 HALF AND HALF
4 OTHER _____
- GO TO Q. 6

IF "ALMOST ALWAYS" ON Q. 4, ASK Q. 5, THEN SKIP TO Q. 8:
(BE SURE TO READ INTRODUCTION AT TOP OF PAGE 3 BEFORE ASKING Q. 8)

5. When driving the Rabbit, is the safety belt usually over your left shoulder, under the arm, or does it usually ride against the top of your arm?
- 1 OVER SHOULDER
2 UNDER ARM
3 TOP OF ARM
4 OTHER (Specify) _____
- (GO TO Q. 8)

6. Why do you choose not to wear the safety belt in this car?
- 1 PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT: DON'T LIKE THE WAY IT FEELS, IT HURTS, UNCOMFORTABLE, RUBS NECK OR FACE
- 2 SHORT LENGTH OF TRIP OR IN AND OUT OF CAR TOO OFTEN
- 3 GENERALLY NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD SAFETY BELTS
- 4 FEELING OF BEING TRAPPED: CONFINING, RESTRICTIVE, FEEL TIED IN
- 5 CONFUSING TO WEAR
- 6 WRINKLES OR SOILS CLOTHING
- 7 NEVER FORMED HABIT
- 8 INCONVENIENT TO WEAR
- 9 TOO LAZY, TOO MUCH TROUBLE
- 0 DOUBT VALUE AS SAFETY MEASURE
- X OTHER (Specify) _____

As you know, the safety belt system in your Rabbit is designed to protect you without your having to fasten the belt buckle. When the belt is unbuckled, an interlock is activated, thereby preventing you from starting the car's engine.

7. Earlier you indicated that you do not always wear the safety belt. How are you able to start and drive the car when you don't wear the belt? Just what do you do?

- 1 UNBUCKLE BELT; NOTHING ELSE
- 2 UNBUCKLE BELT, DISCONNECT INTERLOCK (GO TO Q. 9)
- 3 WEAR BELT BEHIND BACK
- 4 CUT BELT OFF -- LEAVE BUCKLE CONNECTED
- 5 OTHER (Specify) _____

8. Has the interlock system in your VW Rabbit been defeated or disconnected so that you can start the engine without having the safety belt buckled?

- 1 YES, HAS
- 2 NO, HAS NOT
- 3 OTHER (Specify) _____
- 4 DON'T KNOW

IF 2 CIRCLED ON Q. 7, OR
"YES, HAS" ON Q. 8, ASK Q. 9:

9. How was the interlock system disconnected?

- 1 PULLED PLUG
- 2 CUT WIRES
- 3 OTHER _____
- 4 DON'T KNOW

10. In general, would you say that the safety belt in the VW Rabbit is ...

- 1 COMFORTABLE TO WEAR
- 2 FAIRLY COMFORTABLE, (OR)
- 3 NOT COMFORTABLE

We would like your opinion on some specific points related to the comfort and convenience aspects of the safety belt in the Rabbit when you are wearing the belt. For each one I mention, I'd like your opinion in terms of whether you, yourself, consider it no problem at all, a minor problem, a bothersome problem, or a serious problem.

11. When reaching for the glove compartment or any of the controls on the dashboard with the safety belt on, would you say this is no problem for you, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?

- 1 NO PROBLEM
- 2 MINOR
- 3 BOTHERSOME
- 4 SERIOUS
- 5 NO OPINION

12. The belt resting on or rubbing across your face or neck -- no problem for you, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
13. The belt falling off your shoulder -- no problem, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
14. The belt exerting too much pressure on your shoulder or chest -- no problem, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
15. The belt system in your Rabbit interfering with your opening the door and getting into the car -- no problem, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
16. The belt system in your Rabbit interfering with your opening the door and getting out of the car -- no problem, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
17. The belt chafing or rubbing across your chest or some other part of the body -- no problem, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
18. The belt being hard on your clothing, that is, may wrinkle, soil, cause rips or tears, etc. -- no problem, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
19. The belt causing jewelry or other items worn to be damaged, broken, or lost -- no problem, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION

20. Do you consider the padded knee panel under the dashboard to be no problem, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
21. Have you experienced any malfunctions or mechanical failures with the interlock system that you consider to be a problem?
PROBE: Any problems for which the manufacturer might be responsible that have caused you some inconvenience or irritation.
- 1 YES, HAVE
 - 2 NO, HAVE NOT (GO TO Q. 25)
22. Do you consider this problem to be a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 MINOR
 - 2 BOTHERSOME
 - 3 SERIOUS
23. What problem(s) have you experienced?
- 1 CAR WILL START WITHOUT THE BELT FASTENED
 - 2 CAR WILL NOT START EVEN WITH THE BELT FASTENED
 - 3 OTHER (Specify) _____

24. Was the problem corrected by the dealer who sold the car or by someone else? Who?
- 1 DEALER
 - 2 RESPONDENT
 - 3 FAMILY MEMBER
 - 4 MECHANIC -- OTHER THAN DEALER'S
 - 5 PROBLEM HAS NOT BEEN CORRECTED
 - 6 OTHER (Specify) _____

25. Have you received instructions on how the safety belt in the Rabbit should be worn?
- 1 YES
 - 2 NO, HAVE NOT (GO TO Q. 27)
26. Who instructed you as to the proper way to wear the safety belt -- the car dealer or someone else? Who?
- 1 DEALER OR SALESMAN
 - 2 FAMILY MEMBER
 - 3 FRIEND
 - 4 INSTRUCTION MANUAL IN CAR
 - 5 OTHER _____

27. As you know, a person's height, weight, and other measurements have a bearing on the comfort aspects of safety belts. For statistical purposes, would you please tell me your --

HEIGHT _____ FT. _____ IN.
 WEIGHT _____ LBS.
 WAIST SIZE _____ IN.

28. In which of these age groups are you?

- 1 20 OR UNDER
- 2 21 - 24
- 3 25 - 39
- 4 40 - 49
- 5 50 - 59
- 6 60 OR OVER
- 7 REFUSED

29. Which one of these statements comes closest to your total family income before taxes for the last year?

- 1 UNDER \$7,000
- 2 BETWEEN \$7,000 AND \$10,000
- 3 BETWEEN \$10,000 AND \$15,000
- 4 BETWEEN \$15,000 AND \$20,000
- 5 OVER \$20,000
- 6 REFUSED

30. About how many miles in all do you, yourself, drive a year? (In any of the cars you own.)

- 1 UNDER 10,000 MILES
- 2 10,000 - 14,999
- 3 15,000 - 19,999
- 4 20,000 OR OVER
- 5 DON'T KNOW

"This completes the interview. Thank you very much for helping us with the survey."

51274
062375
CONTROL GROUP
ACTIVE SYSTEMS

SAFETY BELT SURVEY - VW RABBIT

OMB No. 04S73034
Expires Dec. 31, 1975

Phone Number:

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

(AREA CODE)

TIME ENDED: _____

TIME STARTED: _____

SEX OF RESPONDENT: 1 MALE 2 FEMALE

LENGTH OF INT: _____ (MIN.)

CITY: _____

DATE: _____

STATE: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____

"Hello, my name is _____, from Opinion Research Corporation, Princeton, New Jersey. We're conducting a survey on the Safety Belt System in the Volkswagen Rabbit."

Do you or does anyone in your household own a VW Rabbit that has the regular lap and shoulder belt for the front seats?

1 YES

2 NO →

DISCONTINUE INTERVIEW

May I please speak to the main driver of this car, that is, the person in your household who drives it most often. IF MAIN DRIVER NOT HOME, FIND OUT WHEN HE/SHE IS EXPECTED IN AND CALL BACK AT THAT TIME. IF TWO DRIVE EQUALLY, OR NEARLY EQUALLY, YOU MAY INTERVIEW EITHER ONE.

1. Do you happen to recall the month and date on which you took delivery of the VW Rabbit?

MONTH _____

DATE _____

2a. About how many miles have you, yourself, driven the Rabbit? Just your best estimate.

- 1 UNDER 1,000
- 2 1,000 - 2,999
- 3 3,000 - 4,999
- 4 5,000 - 6,999
- 5 7,000 - 8,999
- 6 9,000 - 9,999
- 7 10,000 OR OVER
- 8 DON'T KNOW

2b. Some Rabbits have the passive safety belt system which does not require buckling-up each time while others like yours have a lap and shoulder belt which requires buckling-up. Were you able to choose between the two belt systems when you bought your Rabbit, or didn't you have a choice?

- 1 ABLE TO CHOOSE
- 2 HAD NO CHOICE
- 3 DON'T KNOW

IF "ABLE TO CHOOSE" ON Q. 2b, ASK:

2c. Why didn't you choose the passive belt system?

3. Would you describe your general impression of the safety belt in the VW Rabbit as favorable, or unfavorable, or don't you have an impression one way or the other?

- 1 FAVORABLE
- 2 UNFAVORABLE
- 3 NO IMPRESSION

4. On most trips where you do the driving in the Rabbit, would you say that you wear the safety belt almost always or almost never?

- 1 ALMOST ALWAYS
- 2 ALMOST NEVER
- 3 HALF AND HALF
- 4 OTHER _____

GO TO Q. 6a

IF "ALMOST ALWAYS" ON Q. 4, ASK:

5. After you have put on the safety belt in your Rabbit, do you usually wear the shoulder harness over your shoulder, under the arm, or behind your back?

- 1 OVER SHOULDER (GO TO Q. 7)
- 2 UNDER ARM
- 3 BEHIND BACK
- 4 OTHER _____

GO TO Q. 6b

6a. Why do you choose not to wear it?

6b. Why do you choose not to wear it over your shoulder?

- 1 PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT: DON'T LIKE THE WAY IT FEELS, IT HURTS, UNCOMFORTABLE, RUBS NECK OR FACE
- 2 SHORT LENGTH OF TRIP OR IN AND OUT OF CAR TOO OFTEN
- 3 GENERALLY NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD SAFETY BELTS
- 4 FEELING OF BEING TRAPPED: CONFINING, RESTRICTIVE, FEEL TIED IN
- 5 CONFUSING TO WEAR
- 6 WRINKLES OR SOILS CLOTHING
- 7 NEVER FORMED HABIT
- 8 INCONVENIENT TO WEAR
- 9 TOO LAZY, TOO MUCH TROUBLE
- 0 DOUBT VALUE AS SAFETY MEASURE
- X OPPOSED ON PRINCIPLE: DON'T WANT TO BE FORCED TO USE BELT, WANT FREEDOM OF CHOICE
- Y OTHER (Specify) _____

7. At the present time, do you have to fasten the safety belt in order to start the engine, or can you start the engine without fastening the safety belt?
- 1 HAVE TO FASTEN TO START ENGINE (GO TO Q. 15)
 - 2 CAN START WITHOUT FASTENING
 - 3 DON'T KNOW

8. With the engine running and the car in gear, does the "Fasten Belt" reminder light go on, if you don't fasten the safety belt?
- 1 YES, LIGHT GOES ON
 - 2 NO, DOES NOT GO ON
 - 3 DON'T KNOW
- GO TO Q. 10

IF "YES, LIGHT GOES ON" ON Q. 8, ASK:

9. Does the light go on and stay on until the belt is fastened or does it go off after a few seconds?
- 1 LIGHT STAYS ON
 - 2 LIGHT GOES OFF
 - 3 DON'T KNOW

10. How about the buzzer, does that go on if you don't fasten the safety belt?
- 1 YES, BUZZER GOES ON
 - 2 NO, DOES NOT GO ON
 - 3 DON'T KNOW
- GO TO Q. 12a

IF "YES, BUZZER GOES ON" ON Q. 10, ASK:

11. Does the buzzer go on and stay on until the belt is fastened, or does it go off after a few seconds?
- 1 BUZZER STAYS ON
 - 2 BUZZER GOES OFF
 - 3 DON'T KNOW

- 12a. Now, I'd like to know how the safety belt system operated when you bought or first took delivery of your Rabbit.

At that time, did you have to fasten the safety belt in order to start the engine, or could you start the engine without fastening the safety belt?

- 1 HAD TO FASTEN TO START ENGINE (GO TO Q. 13)
- 2 COULD START WITHOUT FASTENING
- 3 DON'T KNOW

- 12b. When you took delivery or first used your Rabbit, did the "Fasten Belt" reminder light go on when you put the car in gear and the safety belt was not fastened?
- 1 YES, LIGHT WENT ON
 - 2 NO, DID NOT GO ON
 - 3 DON'T KNOW
- GO TO Q. 12d

IF "YES, LIGHT WENT ON" ON Q. 12b, ASK:

- 12c. Did the light go on and stay on until the belt was fastened, or did it go off after a few seconds?
- 1 LIGHT STAYED ON
 - 2 LIGHT WENT OFF
 - 3 DON'T KNOW

12d. How about the buzzer, did that go on when you put the car in gear and the belt was not fastened?

- 1 YES, BUZZER WENT ON
- 2 NO, DID NOT GO ON
- 3 DON'T KNOW

GO TO Q. 13

IF 'YES, BUZZER WENT ON' ON Q. 12d, ASK:

12e. Did the buzzer go on and stay on until the belt was fastened, or did it go off after a few seconds?

- 1 BUZZER STAYED ON
- 2 BUZZER WENT OFF
- 3 DON'T KNOW

13. Apparently the safety belt warning system in your Rabbit has been defeated or disconnected. Do you happen to know how this was done?

- 1 PULLED PLUG
- 2 CUT WIRES
- 3 OTHER _____
- 4 DON'T KNOW

14. Was the system defeated or disconnected by yourself, a family member, a friend, an auto dealer, or who?

- 1 RESPONDENT
- 2 FAMILY MEMBER
- 3 FRIEND
- 4 MECHANIC
- 5 DEALER
- 6 OTHER _____

15. Do you ever circumvent the safety belt system so that you don't have to fasten the belt? By circumvent, we mean "fooling" the system such as by fastening the combination lap and shoulder belt behind you, hooking the belt to the door handle, etc.

- 1 YES, DO
- 2 NO, DO NOT (GO TO Q. 18)

16. How often do you circumvent or "fool" the system so that you don't have to fasten the safety belt? Would you say ...

- 1 ALMOST ALWAYS
- 2 MORE THAN HALF THE TIME
- 3 LESS THAN HALF THE TIME
- 4 ALMOST NEVER

17. How are you able to start and drive the car without fastening the safety belt? Specifically, how do you circumvent the system -- just what do you do? (DON'T READ ANSWERS.)

- 1 BUCKLE BELT BEHIND MY BACK EACH TIME I START THE CAR
- 2 HOOK BELT ON DOOR (HANDLE, ARM REST, WINDOW CRANK, ETC.)
- 3 BUCKLE BELT, PUT BEHIND SEAT, IN SEAT, UNDER SEAT, ETC., AND LEAVE IT THAT WAY
- 4 CONNECT PASSENGER BELT TO DRIVER'S BUCKLE
- 5 START CAR WITHOUT SITTING ON SEAT
- 6 DON'T BUCKLE BELT BUT SIT ON OR TUCK IN SEAT
- 7 OTHER (Specify) _____

18. In general, would you say that the safety belt in the VW Rabbit is ...

- 1 COMFORTABLE TO WEAR
- 2 FAIRLY COMFORTABLE, (OR)
- 3 NOT COMFORTABLE

We would like your opinion on some specific points related to the comfort and convenience aspects of the safety belt in the Rabbit when you are wearing the belt. For each one I mention, I'd like your opinion in terms of whether you, yourself, consider it no problem at all, a minor problem, a bothersome problem, or a serious problem.

19. When reaching for the glove compartment or any of the controls on the dashboard with the safety belt on, would you say this is no problem for you, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?

- 1 NO PROBLEM
- 2 MINOR
- 3 BOTHERSOME
- 4 SERIOUS
- 5 NO OPINION

20. The belt resting on or rubbing across your face or neck -- no problem for you, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?

- 1 NO PROBLEM
- 2 MINOR
- 3 BOTHERSOME
- 4 SERIOUS
- 5 NO OPINION

21. The belt falling off your shoulder -- no problem, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?

- 1 NO PROBLEM
- 2 MINOR
- 3 BOTHERSOME
- 4 SERIOUS
- 5 NO OPINION

22. The belt exerting too much pressure on your shoulder or chest -- no problem, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
23. The belt chafing or rubbing across your chest or some other part of the body -- no problem, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
24. The belt being hard on your clothing, that is, may wrinkle, soil, cause rips or tears, etc. -- no problem, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
25. The belt causing jewelry or other items worn to be damaged, broken, or lost -- no problem, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
26. Fastening or buckling the belt -- no problem, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
27. The belt retractor locks when trying to fasten or buckle belt -- no problem, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
28. The belt interferes or makes it difficult for people getting into the back seat -- no problem, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
29. The accessibility of the belt -- that is, being able to take hold of the buckle, pull it out of the reel and fasten it -- no problem, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION

30. Have you experienced any malfunctions or mechanical failures with the safety belt system that you consider to be a problem? PROBE: Any problem for which the manufacturer might be responsible that have caused some inconvenience or irritation.
- 1 YES, HAVE
 - 2 NO, HAVE NOT (GO TO Q. 34)
31. Do you consider this problem to be a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 MINOR
 - 2 BOTHERSOME
 - 3 SERIOUS
32. What problem(s) have you experienced?
33. Was the problem corrected by the dealer who sold the car or by someone else? Who?
- 1 DEALER
 - 2 RESPONDENT
 - 3 FAMILY MEMBER
 - 4 MECHANIC -- OTHER THAN DEALER'S
 - 5 PROBLEM HAS NOT BEEN CORRECTED
 - 6 OTHER (Specify)
-
34. Have you received instructions on how the safety belt in the Rabbit should be worn?
- 1 YES
 - 2 NO, HAVE NOT (GO TO Q. 36)

35. Who instructed you as to the proper way to wear the safety belt -- the car dealer or someone else? Who?

- 1 DEALER OR SALESMAN
- 2 FAMILY MEMBER
- 3 FRIEND
- 4 INSTRUCTION MANUAL IN CAR
- 5 OTHER

36. As you know, a person's height, weight, and other measurements have a bearing on the comfort aspects of safety belts. For statistical purposes, would you please tell me your ...

HEIGHT _____ FT. _____ IN.
 WEIGHT _____ LBS.
 WAIST SIZE _____ IN.

37. In which of these age groups are you?

- 1 20 OR UNDER
- 2 21 - 24
- 3 25 - 39
- 4 40 - 49
- 5 50 - 59
- 6 60 OR OVER

38. Which one of these statements comes closest to your total family income before taxes for the last year?

- 1 UNDER \$7,000
- 2 BETWEEN \$7,000 AND \$10,000
- 3 BETWEEN \$10,000 AND \$15,000
- 4 BETWEEN \$15,000 AND \$20,000
- 5 OVER \$20,000
- 6 REFUSED

39. About how many miles in all do you, yourself, drive a year? (In any of the cars you own.)

- 1 UNDER 10,000 MILES
- 2 10,000 - 14,999
- 3 15,000 - 19,999
- 4 20,000 OR OVER
- 5 DON'T KNOW

"This completes the interview. Thank you very much for helping us with the survey."

Opinion Research Corporation

NORTH HARRISON STREET, PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY 08540

telephone: 609/924-5900

ALBERT WESTEFELD
Vice President

May 27, 1975

Dear Friend:

Our organization has been asked to conduct a survey on the Safety Belt system in the Volkswagen Rabbit.

If you or someone else in your household owns a VW Rabbit, we would appreciate your cooperation on the survey. The enclosed questionnaire should be completed by the person in your household who drives the Rabbit most often. If two drive equally, or nearly equally, either one may answer the questions.

Your answers will take only a few minutes and will help in the job of planning for greater highway safety.

Your answers will remain confidential and will be reported only as parts of statistical totals.

Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope, which requires no postage.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



AW:nyw

Encl.

SAFETY BELT SURVEY - VW RABBIT

INSTRUCTIONS: On questions that have a series of numbers before the possible answers, please circle the number that best expresses your answer. In other cases, please write in your own answer. An example of how to record your answer on questions that have a series of numbers:

What color is your VW Rabbit?
1 BLUE
② GREEN
3 YELLOW
4 WHITE

1. Do you recall the month and date on which you took delivery of the VW Rabbit? MONTH _____
DATE _____

2a. About how many miles have you, yourself, driven the Rabbit? Just your best estimate.
1 UNDER 1,000
2 1,000 - 2,999
3 3,000 - 4,999
4 5,000 - 6,999
5 7,000 - 8,999
6 9,000 - 9,999
7 10,000 OR OVER
8 DON'T KNOW

2b. Some Rabbits have the passive safety belt system which does not require buckling-up each time while others like yours have a lap and shoulder belt which requires buckling-up. Were you able to choose between the two belt systems when you bought your Rabbit, or didn't you have a choice?
1 ABLE TO CHOOSE
2 HAD NO CHOICE
3 DON'T KNOW

IF "1" CIRCLED ON QUES 2b, PLEASE ANSWER QUES. 2c:

2c. Why didn't you choose the passive belt system?

3. Would you describe your general impression of the safety belt in the VW Rabbit as favorable, or unfavorable, or don't you have an impression one way or the other?
1 FAVORABLE
2 UNFAVORABLE
3 NO IMPRESSION

4. On most trips where you do the driving in the Rabbit, would you say that you wear the safety belt almost always or almost never?

- 1 ALMOST ALWAYS
2 ALMOST NEVER
3 HALF AND HALF
4 OTHER _____

GO
TO
Q. 6

IF "ALMOST ALWAYS" ON Q. 4, ASK:

5. After you have put on the safety belt in your Rabbit, do you usually wear the shoulder harness over your shoulder, under the arm, or behind your back?

- 1 OVER SHOULDER (GO TO Q. 7)
2 UNDER ARM
3 BEHIND BACK
4 OTHER _____

GO
TO
Q. 6

6. Why do you choose not to wear it (almost always) (over your shoulder)?

- 1 PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT: DON'T LIKE THE WAY IT FEELS, IT HURTS, UNCOMFORTABLE, RUBS NECK OR FACE
- 2 SHORT LENGTH OF TRIP OR IN AND OUT OF CAR TOO OFTEN
- 3 GENERALLY NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD SAFETY BELTS
- 4 FEELING OF BEING TRAPPED: CONFINING, RESTRICTIVE, FEEL TIED IN
- 5 CONFUSING TO WEAR
- 6 WRINKLES OR SOILS CLOTHING
- 7 NEVER FORMED HABIT
- 8 INCONVENIENT TO WEAR
- 9 TOO LAZY, TOO MUCH TROUBLE
- 0 DOUBT VALUE AS SAFETY MEASURE
- X OPPOSED ON PRINCIPLE: DON'T WANT TO BE FORCED TO USE BELT, WANT FREEDOM OF CHOICE
- Y OTHER (Specify) _____

7. At the present time, do you have to fasten the safety belt in order to start the engine, or can you start the engine without fastening the safety belt?

- 1 HAVE TO FASTEN TO START ENGINE (GO TO Q. 15)
- 2 CAN START WITHOUT FASTENING
- 3 DON'T KNOW

8. With the engine running and the car in gear, does the "Fasten Belt" reminder light go on, if you don't fasten the safety belt?

- 1 YES, LIGHT GOES ON
- 2 NO, DOES NOT GO ON
- 3 DON'T KNOW

GO TO Q. 10

IF "YES, LIGHT GOES ON" ON Q. 8, ASK:

9. Does the light go on and stay on until the belt is fastened or does it go off after a few seconds?

- 1 LIGHT STAYS ON
- 2 LIGHT GOES OFF
- 3 DON'T KNOW

10. How about the buzzer, does that go on if you don't fasten the safety belt?

- 1 YES, BUZZER GOES ON
- 2 NO, DOES NOT GO ON
- 3 DON'T KNOW

GO TO Q. 12a

IF "YES, BUZZER GOES ON" ON Q. 10, ASK:

11. Does the buzzer go on and stay on until the belt is fastened, or does it go off after a few seconds?

- 1 BUZZER STAYS ON
- 2 BUZZER GOES OFF
- 3 DON'T KNOW

12a. Now, I'd like to know how the safety belt system operated when you bought or first took delivery of your Rabbit.

At that time, did you have to fasten the safety belt in order to start the engine, or could you start the engine without fastening the safety belt?

- 1 HAD TO FASTEN TO START ENGINE (GO TO Q. 13)
- 2 COULD START WITHOUT FASTENING
- 3 DON'T KNOW

12b. When you took delivery or first used your Rabbit, did the "Fasten Belt" reminder light go on when you put the car in gear and the safety belt was not fastened?

- 1 YES, LIGHT WENT ON
- 2 NO, DID NOT GO ON
- 3 DON'T KNOW

GO TO Q. 12d

IF "YES, LIGHT WENT ON" ON Q. 12b, ASK:

12c. Did the light go on and stay on until the belt was fastened, or did it go off after a few seconds?

- 1 LIGHT STAYED ON
- 2 LIGHT WENT OFF
- 3 DON'T KNOW

12d. How about the buzzer, did that go on when you put the car in gear and the belt was not fastened?

- 1 YES, BUZZER WENT ON
2 NO, DID NOT GO ON
3 DON'T KNOW

GO TO Q. 13

IF "YES, BUZZER WENT ON" ON Q. 12d, ASK:

12e. Did the buzzer go on and stay on until the belt was fastened, or did it go off after a few seconds?

- 1 BUZZER STAYED ON
2 BUZZER WENT OFF
3 DON'T KNOW

If you circled a "2" or a "3" on question 8 or a "2" or a "3" on question 10, please answer questions 13 and 14, then continue with question 15. If you circled a "1" on question 8 or a "1" on question 10, you should skip questions 13 and 14, and go to question 15.

13. Apparently the safety belt warning system in your Rabbit has been defeated or disconnected. Do you happen to know how this was done?

- 1 PULLED PLUG
2 CUT WIRES
3 OTHER _____

4 DON'T KNOW

14. Was the system defeated or disconnected by yourself, a family member, a friend, an auto dealer, or who?

- 1 RESPONDENT
2 FAMILY MEMBER
3 FRIEND
4 MECHANIC
5 DEALER
6 OTHER _____

15. Do you ever circumvent the safety belt system so that you don't have to fasten the belt? By circumvent, we mean "fooling" the system such as by fastening the combination lap and shoulder belt behind you, hooking the belt to the door handle, etc.

- 1 YES, DO
2 NO, DO NOT (GO TO Q. 18)

16. How often do you circumvent or "fool" the system so that you don't have to fasten the safety belt? Would you say ...

- 1 ALMOST ALWAYS
2 MORE THAN HALF THE TIME
3 LESS THAN HALF THE TIME
4 ALMOST NEVER

17. How are you able to start and drive the car without fastening the safety belt? Specifically, how do you circumvent the system -- just what do you do?

- 1 BUCKLE BELT BEHIND MY BACK EACH TIME I START THE CAR
- 2 HOOK BELT ON DOOR (HANDLE, ARM REST, WINDOW CRANK, ETC.)
- 3 BUCKLE BELT, PUT BEHIND SEAT, IN SEAT, UNDER SEAT, ETC., AND LEAVE IT THAT WAY
- 4 CONNECT PASSENGER BELT TO DRIVER'S BUCKLE
- 5 START CAR WITHOUT SITTING ON SEAT
- 6 DON'T BUCKLE BELT BUT SIT ON OR TUCK IN SEAT
- 7 OTHER (Specify) _____

EVERYBODY PLEASE ANSWER THE REMAINING QUESTIONS.

18. In general, would you say that the safety belt in the VW Rabbit is ...
- 1 COMFORTABLE TO WEAR
 - 2 FAIRLY COMFORTABLE
 - 3 NOT COMFORTABLE

We would like your opinion on some specific points related to the comfort and convenience aspects of the safety belt in the Rabbit when you are wearing the belt. For each one, we'd like your opinion in terms of whether you, yourself, consider it no problem at all, a minor problem, a bothersome problem, or a serious problem.

19. When reaching for the glove compartment or any of the controls on the dashboard with the safety belt on, would you say this is no problem for you, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
20. The belt resting on or rubbing across your face or neck -- how much of a problem?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
21. The belt falling off your shoulder -- how much of a problem?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
22. The belt exerting too much pressure on your shoulder or chest -- how much of a problem?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION

23. The belt chafing or rubbing across your chest or some other part of the body -- how much of a problem?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
24. The belt being hard on your clothing, that is, may wrinkle, soil, cause rips or tears, etc. -- how much of a problem?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
25. The belt causing jewelry or other items worn to be damaged, broken, or lost -- how much of a problem?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
26. Fastening or buckling the belt -- how much of a problem?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
27. The belt retractor locks when trying to fasten or buckle belt -- how much of a problem?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
28. The belt interferes or makes it difficult for people getting into the back seat -- how much of a problem?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
29. The accessibility of the belt -- that is, being able to take hold of the buckle, pull it out of the reel and fasten it -- how much of a problem?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
30. Have you experienced any malfunctions or mechanical failures with the interlock system that you consider to be a problem? Have you had any problems for which the manufacturer might be responsible that have caused you some inconvenience or irritation?
- 1 YES, HAVE
 - 2 NO, HAVE NOT (PLEASE GO TO QUES. 34)
31. Do you consider this problem to be a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 MINOR
 - 2 BOTHERSOME
 - 3 SERIOUS

32. What problem(s) have you experienced?

- 1 CAR WILL START WITHOUT THE BELT FASTENED
- 2 CAR WILL NOT START EVEN WITH THE BELT FASTENED
- 3 OTHER (Specify) _____

33. Was the problem corrected by the dealer who sold the car or by someone else? Who?

- 1 DEALER
- 2 YOU, YOURSELF
- 3 FAMILY MEMBER
- 4 MECHANIC -- OTHER THAN DEALER'S
- 5 PROBLEM HAS NOT BEEN CORRECTED
- 6 OTHER (Specify): _____

34. Have you received instructions on how the safety belt in the Rabbit should be worn?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO HAVE NOT (PLEASE GO TO QUES. 36)

35. Who instructed you as to the proper way to wear the safety belt, the car dealer or someone else? Who?

- 1 DEALER OR SALESMAN
- 2 FAMILY MEMBER
- 3 FRIEND
- 4 INSTRUCTION MANUAL IN CAR
- 5 OTHER _____

36. As you know, a person's height, weight, and other measurements have a bearing on the comfort aspects of safety belts. For statistical purposes, would you please tell us your --

HEIGHT _____ FT. _____ IN.
WEIGHT _____ LBS.
WAIST SIZE _____ IN.

37. In which of these age groups are you?

- 1 20 OR UNDER
- 2 21 - 24
- 3 25 - 39
- 4 40 - 49
- 5 50 - 59
- 6 60 OR OVER

38. Which one of these statements comes closest to your total family income before taxes for the last year?
- 1 UNDER \$7,000
 - 2 BETWEEN \$7,000 AND \$10,000
 - 3 BETWEEN \$10,000 AND \$15,000
 - 4 BETWEEN \$15,000 AND \$20,000
 - 5 OVER \$20,000
39. About how many miles in all do you, yourself, drive a year? (In any of the cars you own.)
- 1 UNDER 10,000 MILES
 - 2 10,000 - 14,999
 - 3 15,000 - 19,999
 - 4 20,000 OR OVER
 - 5 DON'T KNOW
40. Your sex: 1 MALE
 2 FEMALE
41. Your city: _____ State: _____

Thank you for your cooperation.

INSTRUCTIONS: On questions that have a series of numbers before the possible answers, please circle the number that best expresses your answer. In other cases, please write in your own answer. An example of how to record your answer on questions that have a series of numbers:

What color is your VW Rabbit?

1 BLUE
 ② GREEN
 3 YELLOW
 4 WHITE

1. Do you recall the month and date on which you took delivery of the VW Rabbit?

MONTH _____
 DATE _____

2. About how many miles have you, yourself, driven the Rabbit? Just your best estimate.

1 UNDER 1,000
 2 1,000 - 2,999
 3 3,000 - 4,999
 4 5,000 - 6,999
 5 7,000 - 8,999
 6 9,000 - 9,999
 7 10,000 OR OVER
 8 DON'T KNOW

3. Some Rabbits have the automatic or passive safety belt system, while others have the one-piece combination lap and shoulder belt which requires buckling-up each time you get into the car. Were you able to choose between the two belt systems when you bought your Rabbit, or didn't you have a choice?

1 ABLE TO CHOOSE
 2 HAD NO CHOICE
 3 DON'T KNOW

IF "1" CIRCLED ON QUES. 3, PLEASE ANSWER QUES. 4:

4. Why did you choose the passive belt system?

5. Would you describe your general impression of the safety belt in the VW Rabbit as favorable, or unfavorable, or don't you have an impression one way or the other?

1 FAVORABLE
 2 UNFAVORABLE
 3 NO IMPRESSION

6. On most trips where you do the driving in the Rabbit, would you say that you wear the safety belt almost always or almost never?

1 ALMOST ALWAYS
 2 ALMOST NEVER
 3 HALF AND HALF
 4 OTHER (Specify): _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROCEEDING:

If you circled a "1" on question 6, please turn page and continue with questions 7 through 9, then go to question 14 and continue to the end.

If you circled a "2," "3," or "4" on question 6, please go to page 3, question 10, then continue to the end.

PLEASE ANSWER QUES. 7-9 IF YOU CIRCLED A "1" ON QUES. 6.

7. When driving the Rabbit, is the safety belt usually over your left shoulder, under the arm, or does it usually ride against the top of your arm?
- 1 OVER SHOULDER
 - 2 UNDER ARM
 - 3 TOP OF ARM
 - 4 OTHER (Specify):
-

8. As you know, the safety belt system in your Rabbit is designed to protect you without your having to fasten the belt buckle. When the belt is unbuckled, an interlock is activated, thereby preventing you from starting the car's engine. Has the interlock system in your VW Rabbit been defeated or disconnected so that you can start the engine without having the safety belt buckled?
- 1 YES, HAS
 - 2 NO, HAS NOT
 - 3 OTHER (Specify):
-
- 4 DON'T KNOW

IF "1" CIRCLED ON QUES. 8, PLEASE ANSWER QUES. 9:

9. How was the interlock system disconnected?
- 1 PULLED PLUG
 - 2 CUT WIRES
 - 3 OTHER (Specify):
-
- 4 DON'T KNOW

AFTER ANSWERING QUES. 9, PLEASE GO TO PAGE 4, QUES. 14.

PLEASE ANSWER QUES. 10-13 IF YOU CIRCLED A "2," "3," OR "4" ON QUES. 6.

10. Why do you choose not to wear the safety belt in this car?

- 1 PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT: DON'T LIKE THE WAY IT FEELS, IT HURTS, UNCOMFORTABLE, RUBS NECK OR FACE
- 2 SHORT LENGTH OF TRIP OR IN AND OUT OF CAR TOO OFTEN
- 3 GENERALLY NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD SAFETY BELTS
- 4 FEELING OF BEING TRAPPED: CONFINING, RESTRICTIVE, FEEL TIED IN
- 5 CONFUSING TO WEAR
- 6 WRINKLES OR SOILS CLOTHING
- 7 NEVER FORMED HABIT
- 8 INCONVENIENT TO WEAR
- 9 TOO LAZY, TOO MUCH TROUBLE
- 0 DOUBT VALUE AS SAFETY MEASURE
- X OTHER (Specify) _____

11. As you know, the safety belt system in your Rabbit is designed to protect you without your having to fasten the belt buckle. When the belt is unbuckled, an interlock is activated, thereby preventing you from starting the car's engine. Earlier you indicated that you do not always wear the safety belt. How are you able to start and drive the car when you don't wear the belt? Just what do you do?

- 1 UNBUCKLE BELT; NOTHING ELSE
- 2 UNBUCKLE BELT, DISCONNECT INTERLOCK (PLEASE GO TO QUES. 13)
- 3 WEAR BELT BEHIND BACK
- 4 CUT BELT OFF -- LEAVE BUCKLE CONNECTED
- 5 OTHER (Specify) _____

12. Has the interlock system in your VW Rabbit been defeated or disconnected so that you can start the engine without having the safety belt buckled?

- 1 YES, HAS
- 2 NO, HAS NOT
- 3 OTHER (Specify) _____
- 4 DON'T KNOW

IF "1" CIRCLED ON QUES. 12, PLEASE ANSWER QUES. 13:

13. How was the interlock system disconnected?

- 1 PULLED PLUG
- 2 CUT WIRES
- 3 OTHER _____
- 4 DON'T KNOW

PLEASE TURN PAGE.

EVERYBODY PLEASE ANSWER THE REMAINING QUESTIONS.

14. In general, would you say that the safety belt in the VW Rabbit is ...
- 1 COMFORTABLE TO WEAR
 - 2 FAIRLY COMFORTABLE
 - 3 NOT COMFORTABLE

We would like your opinion on some specific points related to the comfort and convenience aspects of the safety belt in the Rabbit when you are wearing the belt. For each one, we'd like your opinion in terms of whether you, yourself, consider it no problem at all, a minor problem, a bothersome problem, or a serious problem.

15. When reaching for the glove compartment or any of the controls on the dashboard with the safety belt on, would you say this is no problem for you, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
16. The belt resting on or rubbing across your face or neck -- how much of a problem?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
17. The belt falling off your shoulder -- how much of a problem?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
18. The belt exerting too much pressure on your shoulder or chest -- how much of a problem?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
19. The belt system in your Rabbit interfering with your opening the door and getting into the car -- how much of a problem?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
20. The belt system in your Rabbit interfering with your opening the door and getting out of the car -- how much of a problem?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
21. The belt chafing or rubbing across your chest or some other part of the body -- how much of a problem?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION

22. The belt being hard on your clothing, that is, may wrinkle, soil, cause rips or tears, etc. -- how much of a problem?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
23. The belt causing jewelry or other items worn to be damaged, broken, or lost -- how much of a problem?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
24. Do you consider the padded knee panel under the dashboard to be no problem, a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 NO PROBLEM
 - 2 MINOR
 - 3 BOTHERSOME
 - 4 SERIOUS
 - 5 NO OPINION
25. Have you experienced any malfunctions or mechanical failures with the interlock system that you consider to be a problem? Have you had any problems for which the manufacturer might be responsible that have caused you some inconvenience or irritation?
- 1 YES, HAVE
 - 2 NO, HAVE NOT (PLEASE GO TO QUES. 29)
26. Do you consider this problem to be a minor one, a bothersome one, or a serious one?
- 1 MINOR
 - 2 BOTHERSOME
 - 3 SERIOUS
27. What problem(s) have you experienced?
- 1 CAR WILL START WITHOUT THE BELT FASTENED
 - 2 CAR WILL NOT START EVEN WITH THE BELT FASTENED
 - 3 OTHER (Specify) _____

28. Was the problem corrected by the dealer who sold the car or by someone else? Who?
- 1 DEALER
 - 2 YOU, YOURSELF
 - 3 FAMILY MEMBER
 - 4 MECHANIC -- OTHER THAN DEALER'S
 - 5 PROBLEM HAS NOT BEEN CORRECTED
 - 6 OTHER (Specify): _____

29. Have you received instructions on how the safety belt in the Rabbit should be worn?
- 1 YES
 - 2 NO HAVE NOT (PLEASE GO TO QUES. 31)
30. Who instructed you as to the proper way to wear the safety belt, the car dealer or someone else? Who?
- 1 DEALER OR SALESMAN
 - 2 FAMILY MEMBER
 - 3 FRIEND
 - 4 INSTRUCTION MANUAL IN CAR
 - 5 OTHER _____
31. As you know, a person's height, weight, and other measurements have a bearing on the comfort aspects of safety belts. For statistical purposes, would you please tell us your --
- HEIGHT _____ FT. _____ IN.
 WEIGHT _____ LBS.
 WAIST SIZE _____ IN.
32. In which of these age groups are you?
- 1 20 OR UNDER
 - 2 21 - 24
 - 3 25 - 39
 - 4 40 - 49
 - 5 50 - 59
 - 6 60 OR OVER
33. Which one of these statements comes closest to your total family income before taxes for the last year?
- 1 UNDER \$7,000
 - 2 BETWEEN \$7,000 AND \$10,000
 - 3 BETWEEN \$10,000 AND \$15,000
 - 4 BETWEEN \$15,000 AND \$20,000
 - 5 OVER \$20,000
34. About how many miles in all do you, yourself, drive a year? (In any of the cars you own.)
- 1 UNDER 10,000 MILES
 - 2 10,000 - 14,999
 - 3 15,000 - 19,999
 - 4 20,000 OR OVER
 - 5 DON'T KNOW
35. Your sex: 1 MALE
 2 FEMALE
36. Your city: _____ State: _____

Thank you for your cooperation.

Opinion Research Corporation

NORTH HARRISON STREET, PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY 08540 / TELEPHONE: 609/924-5900

ALBERT WESTEFELD
Vice President

December 29, 1975

Dear Friend:

A few months ago you or someone in your household who owns a VW Rabbit participated in a survey about the Safety Belt system in this car.

We are conducting a short follow-up survey and would appreciate your cooperation.

The enclosed questionnaire should be completed by the person who responded to the previous questionnaire. If this person is not available, the enclosed questionnaire may be completed by anyone in your household who drives the Rabbit.

The answers will take only a few minutes and will help in planning for greater highway safety. Responses will remain confidential and will be reported only as parts of statistical totals.

Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope, which requires no postage.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Albert Westefeld

Encl.
AW:nyw



AN ARTHUR D. LITTLE COMPANY

7. What suggestions do you have for improving the safety belt system in your VW Rabbit?

8. In which of these age groups are you?

- 1 20 OR UNDER
- 2 21 - 24
- 3 25 - 39
- 4 40 - 49
- 5 50 - 59
- 6 60 OR OVER

9. Which one of these statements comes closest to your total family income before taxes for the last year?

- 1 UNDER \$7,000
- 2 BETWEEN \$7,000 AND \$10,000
- 3 BETWEEN \$10,000 AND \$15,000
- 4 BETWEEN \$15,000 AND \$20,000
- 5 OVER \$20,000

10. About how many miles in all do you, yourself, drive a year? (In any of the cars you own.)

- 1 UNDER 10,000 MILES
- 2 10,000 - 14,999
- 3 15,000 - 19,999
- 4 20,000 OR OVER
- 5 DON'T KNOW

11. Your sex:

- 1 MALE
- 2 FEMALE

12. Your city: _____

State: _____

13. Phone number:

--	--	--

(AREA CODE)

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Thank you for your cooperation.

SAFETY BELT SURVEY - VW RABBIT

INSTRUCTIONS: On questions that have a series of numbers before the possible answers, please circle the number that best expresses your answer. In other cases, please write in your own answer. An example of how to record your answer on questions that have a series of numbers:

What color is your VW Rabbit?

- 1 BLUE
- ② GREEN
- 3 YELLOW
- 4 WHITE

1. Do you recall the month and date on which you took delivery of the VW Rabbit? MONTH _____
DATE _____

2. On most trips where you do the driving in the Rabbit, would you say that you wear the safety belt almost always or almost never?
1 ALMOST ALWAYS
2 ALMOST NEVER
3 HALF AND HALF
4 OTHER (Specify) _____

IF "1" CIRCLED ON QUES. 2, PLEASE ANSWER QUES. 3:

3. When driving the Rabbit, is the safety belt usually over your shoulder, under the arm, or does it usually ride against the top of your arm?
1 OVER SHOULDER
2 UNDER ARM
3 TOP OF ARM
4 OTHER (Specify) _____

4. Would you say that you wear the safety belt in the VW Rabbit more often or less often now than you did when you took delivery or first started to drive the car?
1 MORE OFTEN
2 LESS OFTEN
3 ABOUT THE SAME

IF "2" CIRCLED ON QUES. 4, PLEASE ANSWER QUES. 5:

5. Why do you wear it less often?

6. When you drive another car which has safety belts, would you say that you fasten the safety belt --
1 ALMOST ALWAYS
2 ALMOST NEVER
3 HALF AND HALF
4 OTHER (Specify) _____

7. As you know, the 1975 VW Rabbit came out with an automatic safety belt system. As the door opens, it pulls the belt from the retractor. When the door is closed, the belt automatically places itself across the chest of the driver.

Is the safety belt in your Rabbit still connected to the door or has it been disconnected?

- 1 STILL CONNECTED
2 BEEN DISCONNECTED
3 OTHER _____

8. What suggestions do you have for improving the safety belt system in your VW Rabbit?

9. In which of these age groups are you?

- 1 20 OR UNDER
2 21 - 24
3 25 - 39
4 40 - 49
5 50 - 59
6 60 OR OVER

10. Which one of these statements comes closest to your total family income before taxes for the last year?

- 1 UNDER \$7,000
2 BETWEEN \$7,000 AND \$10,000
3 BETWEEN \$10,000 AND \$15,000
4 BETWEEN \$15,000 AND \$20,000
5 OVER \$20,000

11. About how many miles in all do you, yourself, drive a year? (In any of the cars you own.)

- 1 UNDER 10,000 MILES
2 10,000 - 14,999
3 15,000 - 19,999
4 20,000 OR OVER
5 DON'T KNOW

12. Your sex:

- 1 MALE
2 FEMALE

13. Your city: _____

State: _____

14. Phone number:

--	--	--

(AREA CODE)

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Thank you for your cooperation.

"What suggestions do you have for improving the safety belt system in your VW Rabbit?" (Passive) [Q. 8]

Like to have some kind of indicator light to show that the belt is in a functional condition.

The belt do not always automatically lock on sudden stopping.

Improvement in retractor. Belt sometime twists and unless straightened, invalidates entire safety system.

Make the retractor stronger. Belt wears the seat where it rubs when opening.

Sometimes while I am parking that belt get in action -- while backing for park it makes movement hard. In service it is great, convenient, easy. For man like me driving in and out so much! That is why I don't use seat belt in any other car. And this is the reason I bought the Rabbit. For the seat belt, not the savings.

I need a higher neck -- belt cuts my neck.

The way the end of the seat belt engages the recepticle that is fastened to the door is extremely awkward. This makes it difficult to reconnect the belt after it has been disconnected for one reason or other.

Excellent device!

Do away with belts. In my opinion they are only good for the passenger, as they do not know the reaction of the driver.

If practical engineering-wise, would also include a "lap" belt.

Make it adjustable so that it can be lowered. On a smaller person it rubs against neck or collar bone. Especia-ly in the summer when wearing lighter clothing.

Belt should be made to retract faster as belt often gets caught in door latch when door is closed.

I have a two door. When I have to carry back seat passenger, it has a tendency to either flip the front seat back when they are entering or pull the door shut if you hold the seat back and forward. This is only minor aggrevation. I usually beat the problem by unreeling the entire length of seat belt and just hold it while they enter the back seat.

I think a lap type safety belt should be installed even though my car is equipped with the belt connected to the door.

What improvement? It's fantastic!

It's the best I've seen so far.

Make it easier to remove from the door. Would make the unit more durable -- I mean, it works but is quite flimsy in construction.

Prevent tangling of seat belts at the guide near the retractor.

Door adjustment for people of different heights so it doesn't hinder arm movement.

Apply a padded strip to the sharp edge of the nylon webbing which irritates the neck unless the person is wearing a high collar.

Connect the belt to the door further down so it ensures that belt will not ride-up on neck.

Completely satisfactory.

Think it should have regular seat belt.

Make some provision for adjusting the height of the seat belt on the door so that it will not hit smaller children across the neck area.

Sometimes it locks without any impact. I am doubtful about whether it will work properly on impact. Also, it is slow to retract when closing the door and sometimes (often!) gets caught in the door and is becoming frayed. Also, it should work on quick stops, not only on impact.

My bucket seat is completely ruined because of the friction between the belt and the seat. It's worn all the way through with only 10,000 miles on the car. It is the worst seat belt system in any car today and I wish you forward this letter to VW and tell them it stinks! If you would like to see pictures of the hole in my bucket seat caused by that seat belt system, I will be glad to forward them at your request.

Keep passive restraint for driver but make passive restraint optional for passenger. It is difficult for children and older people to use, though if driver pulls belt out all way for them it is easier.

Modify retractor to operate on principle of window shade roller, i.e., a pawl and ratchet wheel arrangement to restrict "take-up" feature of belt.

Make the seat belt permanently attached to the doors for both front and back seats.

With seat in a forward position (locked forward, not tilted), retractors sometimes does not work and belt is caught as door closes. Perhaps the chrome guide loop could be moved slightly.

I like it very much.

Do not like to be compelled to wear one.

Only time this style seat belt is a problem is for a person getting out of back seat -- the belt tends to hold front seat back from tipping forward, thus making it even harder for person on back seat.

Always a question -- will the inertia system work? Needs to take less of "jerk" to lock. Also, coil not placed at right angle to retract on closing door.

Uncertain that they will engage upon sudden impact. They are wearing out a spot on the seat belt (both seats).

I could do without the automatic system which stops connected when door is open. I leave it hooked because it is not in a convenient place to unhook and rehook each time, but the strap causes difficulty when getting in and out of car with packages.

It's find as it is.

Should be connected to brake peddle to activate.

It should be adjustable to go up or down the door because it always ends up around my neck and is very irritating in the summer.

Stop the buzz.

I think the safety belt system is good as it is.

Would suggest putting a heavier lock on doors to prevent them springing in an accident, because if the door does open the seat belt wouldn't help. Fortunately I've never been in the position to see what would happen.

I prefer a lap belt/chest belt that was available on paper but not on the show room. I always wear seat belt. I wear it for protection and believe your automatic model is inferior to a good lap belt shoulder strap combination. It is also awkward to get out of the car holding something.

Very inconvenient but am afraid that it will not always be effective, concerned if it will function at all under lateral force.

We like it a lot.

I consider the VW Rabbit system to be one of the best.

Three point lap belt -- no knee retractor.

Just be sure it will work if we ever need it. VW says it will.

It suits me OK.

Reduce tension, improve retraction mechanism to not allow "kinked" belt to "clog" and fail to retract. Also to not become bound in crack of fold down seat back and not retract.

Tension somewhat too tight or appears to be.

It's fine, except it needs to be more sturdy.

Make them a bit higher on the door. Relocate belt system.

The belt twists as the door is opened and shut, etc., making it necessary to continually straighten it out because the retractor will not work if the belt is twisted. This is my only complaint about the system, otherwise I think it is wonderful.

It irritates the left side of my neck at times -- something could be done here.

I prefer a lap belt, or attach belt to something other than the door.

Excellent safety system. More cars should follow.

Improving the latching end, it is difficult to push it in, while sitting, with the left hand.

Should not drain battery no matter how small the current used. (when car is not in use for a long period of time.)

I'm a believer in using the safety belt. I hope the VW Rabbit belt can be depend upon.

The belt often sticks. If there was any way to held that. Also it rides up and on long trips it is uncomfortable.

Do away with the Rabbit, safety belt system is fine.

A few times when I have tried to disengage it from the door, I have pulled the whole unit off the door accidentally. I was then unable to start the car or hook up the seat belt until I could find someone to fix it. Otherwise it's great.

Sometimes the belt does not retract properly. The plastic part on the door could be improved.

Reduce size of door bracket. It sticks out too far and is easily bumped into.

Would like to be able to get out car easier when I have packages. The belt sometimes makes this awkward. This can be avoided however by simply releasing the belt from the door so that this is not really a problem. I think the passive restraint is great in that persons who ordinarily avoid the use of seat belts are forced to use them.

Make the belt more comfortable for women. The shoulder belt is quite uncomfortable for them.

I like it very much.

It is very unhandy to get out of the car with a package, or for a lady with a purse.

Have had buzzer and light go on while driving. A tug on the belt and it goes away. It is never detectable when serviced.

Raise the take up reel. It would be easier for a back passenger to push the seat forward, and the door open, for entry/exit.

Method of retracting belt -- not always functional due to belt twist or bind around seat. Cannot start car in case of emergency need with belt disconnected (as in transport of small child).

Buckle assembly has failed -- replaced under warranty -- possibly could be redesigned. Should be able to disconnect ignition interlock.

I don't wear them.

Make it easier to pull out. Keep it from getting caught in door when closing door from outside. The plastic piece attached to the retainer and through which the belt is pulled on rear seat belts should be fastened more securely so they do not break off, two screws not enough.

Get rid of the whole system and start all over. The seat belt is extremely uncomfortable, and it is very difficult for a passenger riding in the back seat to get out of the car without unhooking the seat belt. Thus in most cases the front seat belt must be unhooked and this triggers that annoying buzzer.

Felt uncomfortable with shoulder belt only, even with knee bar in place. I added lap belts and use them almost exclusively. Shoulder belt rubs uncomfortably on shoulder, especially at long distances. Inertia belts are uncomfortable, constant tension, inconvenient, often stick (back seat especially), untrustworthy -- at least I don't trust them.

It is a very good system. Improvement not necessary.

The warning buzzer is a very annoying distraction. It is not needed, because the driver should be aware of the fact he doesn't have the safety belt on.

I am short - 5 feet - and it is awkward trying to reach around to reconnect the belt. Also, the belt pulls the door to, often before the last ankle is safely in.

Really none. However, when opening the door quickly the retractor sometimes catches and snaps the door back. This causes the prospective operator to bump into the door. Maybe something could be done about that.

The black covering at the top of seat belt keeps sliding down the seat belt and keeps getting in the way of the retracting device.

The electrical connection to the warning light and warning buzzer seems to be faulty. They light up and buzz periodically when belt is properly connected. Example: Drive 50 miles OK, then go over a bump, light and buzz, hit the dash and it will go off again.

Retractor sluggish and does not always roll up belt when door closes. Occurred during last month. Uncomfortable across shoulder. Should have adjustable clip, like other cars, to keep belt slightly loose on shoulder. Particularly annoying in summer when jackets are not worn.

Fix the spring lock that connects the belt to the door in such a manner that it will not break. I have had to have both of mine repaired.

Belt tends to twist and not retract at times. Higher placement on the door should help eliminate excessive drag on tall people.

It is next to impossible to exit from the car with an armfull of packages; dry cleaning; groceries, etc. It has become necessary to exit first and then reach in for packages, etc. Rather minor complaint but ...

Some way to prevent belt from closing door when climbing in. It tends to catch your foot in door when climbing in back seat.

It wore a hole in seat. Opening and closing door. Something should be done about that feature.

It is hard to carry a package from the driver's seat because the seat belt goes so far, catches and wants to snap back.

VW should install a better lock on the door where you disconnect the belt. Our car's safety belt keep falling off on the driver's side, on the day we were driving out our car for the first time from the dealer's showroom.

I've sold my Rabbit not because of the belts but certainly the car did not live up to many of my expectations or its claims.

Smoother and easier release is needed when opening doors to enter the car. The belt has gotten fouled up in its retractor and has forced me to enter from the passenger's side and crawl over seat to the driver's side. Fabric belt is made of is abrasive to skin, especially noticeable in light summer clothes.

The system is fine. The only thing I would change is I would remove the buzzer and make it so the car would start without the safety belt hooked up.

Retracting mechanism could be a bit more positive. Belt sometimes stays slack until retracting mechanism is straightened out and started.

I have auto safety belt system, originally connected to starter. All parking and car wash attendants and some passengers disconnect the belt at the door before and can stop them. The small metal pin often flipped out and was lost which made starting impossible unless the belt was held manually in the door connection while starting. Should be hidden switch for disconnect so that only owner could do it easily. Also, secure pin in connection.

Difficult to get in and out of car.

It's good.

When attached to door, belt makes it difficult to tip front seat down for entry to rear seat on 2-door model. If a catch or retainer of some sort were placed on the outside edge of the front seat, belt could be hooked into catch forcing belt to lie snug to seat surface and back of seat could easily tipped forward without disconnecting belt from door.

(1) Make it mandatory for all Rabbits or any other car upon which system may be installed; (2) advertise system as a safety feature; (3) advertise as meeting passive restraint (air bag) standards.

Get rid of the knee buster and the door fastened belt and put belts on to the floor pan.

The system is excellent. I would highly recommend it and look for it in a new car.

(1) Belt could be a little longer, for when door is opened full, it keeps pushing seat back when folded up to exit rear passengers, requiring someone to hold door open and push on rear seat. (2) Belt has restrictions on some heavy clothing making it difficult to move in seats.

It doesn't always retract.

People should have the choice to wear seat belts or not.

At two different occasions, on attempting to open doors, the belts were jammed, and the force of opening doors caused them to break off of door holder. (Been corrected under warranty.)

Sometimes the belt will ride too high up and interfere with the neck causing discomfort.

When worn over shoulder for long periods, it tends to rub collar bone. This is when I switch it under arm. Perhaps if it were padded it would be more comfortable.

It's fine as it is now.

Impossible to open the door soon enough after a stop, because of the inertia lock. Also these belts cannot be used on children.

When I have had occasion to remove the belt from the door attachment, there have been instances that I have had some difficulty replacing it in the receptacle. The holder appears to be too flimsy.

I feel this is the best system so far.

Adding a waist attachment in the same fashion as the shoulder system.

Use lap belts, and shoulder belts that work.

The seat belt warning system light and buzzer has been coming on since we had 5,000 miles on the car and they haven't fixed it yet. We suggest VW hire an electrician.

Twisting of the belt prevents the belt from always being retracted.

It's the best system I've yet seen.

Take it off completely or else use a conventional type. The car was a complete disappointment for a road car, gave it to my wife after 14,000 miles and I am now back in an American made mid-size car and very happy. VW Rabbit not for a traveling man.

It's dynamite.

I love it. When I open the door and get in the car it is so automatic and comfortable I don't even know I have it on. It's the only seat belt I've never complained about using.

Remove the potential and real risk of minor injury which occurs if the door is opened too suddenly. A sudden jerk in opening the door may activate the belt lock and the reaction may force the door into a part of the human body. Improve retraction. Belt sometimes doesn't coil up.

Make retractors that function properly and consistently.

If you are going to have one put it across the hip-lap area.

Is there any way to avoid having the belt locking when the door is opened too quickly. Perhaps due to the nature of the system, this is not possible.

On long trips I sometimes loop the belt down under the knob, making it into a lap belt for comfort. Maybe a peg could be put there. Usually belt comes off knob when door opens.

A lap belt should be added but not attached to the door. Upon collision, if the door ever flew open it's good bye.

The most comfortable belt system I've ever used!

If you take them out of the door you can't start the car. I don't feel you should be forced to wear them, you should have a choice. I personally like them and would wear them anyway.

Lower it so that it doesn't strangle short people.

On the automatic system: Make it convenient to disconnect buzzer system (no longer required by Federal law), (1) so passenger side can remain disconnected for more convenient parcel (groceries) storage; (2) so driver with parcels in his arms can enter driver side, place parcels on right seat and then connect the belt if he so prefers. In short, sometimes the door attached belt is in the way.

Simplify so that valets and guests do not rip it off the door trying to get in or out.

The system is very effective, good, and highly recommend it.

Have a ratchet so that some slack may be had.

Smoother running returns for the belts, many times the return will stick and then the door won't open; if you're not expecting this, it's easy to hit your head on the door.

Something to move belt away from set when getting in and out of car ... so you don't have belt to rub against getting in and out.

Ours is a 2-door and when someone is getting out or in, the belt makes folding down the front seat a pain in the butt -- only chance I would make is to buy a 4-door instead of 2-door.

The front door still do not shut until slammed. The retractor does not have enough take-up tension, especially during cold weather. Unless care is taken, the belt slammed in the door jam. The belt on my driver's side is already frayed from this. I sure would like my tension adjusted. I'm not as keen on the belt as I was at first.

I can not give any suggestions as I feel it is excellent.

The belt (driver's side) has worn my upholstery badly. Will VW do something about it?

I have had trouble with snap release on the door, keep falling apart -- it has been reported.

I like it since it hooks to the door so you can get in and out without fastening and unfastening it.

I do not like this system. I believe a regular lap belt and shoulder harness would be better than attached to the door.

I am extremely pleased with the system. No suggestions for improvement.

Many disadvantages to this system: (1) Dangerous for small children. (2) May hurt knees and legs if they hit restraint pad. (3) Hard to get into back seat. (4) If you open door fast, system locks. (5) Very hard to reattach when unhooked. (6) Hard for old people to negotiate.

We always use it, but we are not sure that it would work in a crash. I hope we never find out.

Stronger spring in door section where belt connects.

You need a safety belt system like a Volvo, it works easily and get gives you freedom to reach across the car to the glove box. The Volks safety belt always catches your coat, jacket, shirt pockets, pencils, etc. Very poor design.

Redesign. It hits most people in the wrong place, pull is constant and so strong as to annoy.

On the 2-door model, it is difficult to push rear seat forward with door open and belt connected (possible but difficult).

Add a lap belt. I know the principle of the knee restraint but still would feel more secure with a lap belt also.

Make it more sensitive -- don't know whether it is working or it is broken. Belt is starting to fray at edges.

The clamp on the door should be improved as it sometimes comes apart.

Adjust it so it will fit smaller children right (above the shoulder) instead of around their neck.

Too many starting problems.

Feel more restraint should be built into it.

Availability of parts to the belt. Our dealer has been unable to get the needed part for several months. Also, we often have difficulty in getting the passenger belt to retract properly.

I believe retriever should be improved so it would lock up faster when strain is placed on belt.

Would prefer a warning that the belts are not on, but the car would start without at least the passenger side having to be connected.

I think they are OK.

Comfort is great as is simplicity -- requires no action on my part. Mechanically the spring slip on the door female receptacle should be better designed to stay in place. When I disconnect the belt from the door (when I'm washing and cleaning the inside of the car), the spring clip sometimes comes loose preventing reengagement of the belt.

It's OK, don't touch it.

I think it is excellent. I always wear my seat belt.

Install a lap belt.

Not 100% sure it would be effective as there has been no occasion to test it. However, it did tighten once on a sudden stop.

Improve the lock mechanism on the doors so they don't fall apart. Driver's side lock has been repaired twice, passenger side once, and parts were slow arriving when not on hand.

Improve the quality of the fabric in the belt itself. I believe the weight of the fabric should be a little heavier.

It's an excellent system.

The retracting system used with the automatic safety belt no longer functions properly. Closing the door often catches the belt causing minor damage. This damage could cause more serious problems over an extended period. More tension may be required in the take-up mechanism.

It should be more sensitive. I believe even with it on I could go through windshield.

Improve the ability and rate of belt retraction by the retracting reel.

Have belts off cars or take off door.

An alternate anchor point on door, i.e., one that is lower, so that shorter people like my 56.5" tall daughter can more comfortable and safely use them.

Being 5'2", somewhat short, I find the seat belt rather uncomfortable because it hits me up near neck bone and feels rather binding.

In my opinion the safety belt system is fine the way it is.

More tension on return mechanism of belt reel.

The tin spring that holds the latch in place separates from the plastic bracket. This causing belt to unlatch or not latch. Suggestion, use all metal latch or a better way of keeping spring in place.

My husband finds the belt system a real irritation as it crosses his chest and abdomen. When connected, it forces the passengers to slide under and into the seats in a movement most likely to result in a bad back, and completely opposite that recommended by doctors for good posture. You are supposed to sit in the seat first, then bring your feet in, but the belt crosses the seat when the door is open and I can not manage this. Unfortunately, it is very awkward to unhook and rehook the door connection unless the seat is adjusted way back so a detachable lap belt may work better. I find the Sirocco system too uncomfortable and confining. It is my understanding that Ralph Nader, filled with hang ups and fears, does not even drive a car. I feel I am no menace to anyone being comfortable and alert without a restraint system, so I recommend the interlock relay be designed so the seat belt connection may be optional and that the car can always be started. I have had 3 tows and several calls to AAA even before disconnecting.

That it fastens across the midriff part of the body on the same motility as the system is now, and when opening the door quickly the belt jams and it smarts on the fingers. I place the belt behind my back crossing the seat. The material rubs and irritates my neck too.

Find a way to keep the seat belt from closing the door when you're trying to get into the car. Also, the seat belt makes it almost impossible to get in and out of the car while holding a baby or a package.

I do suggest that the quality of the car be improved. The seat belt system is about the only thing that hasn't fallen apart on the car.

Improve catch on door.

There are times when the safety belt doesn't feel safe. The question arises, "Will it work when I need it?" I firmly believe this safety feature should be tested by your service department to convince the purchaser that the system is safe.

I think there should be a stronger spring in the retractor or at least it should be a little different, because it doesn't always retract all the way to fit snugly.

Stronger and easier connection to door -- fitting squeaks on rough roads.

Make the retractor more efficient. Modify it somehow so the fastened seat belt won't push the front seat back.

I don't know what to suggest to improve it but I will describe the one major problem I have. The belt system is completely impossible when carrying elderly or even slightly handicapped persons for whom getting in or out of a car is a bit of a problem anyway. Even the slight inconvenience (to a highly mobile person) of the attached belt can be insurmountable and they cannot comfortably maneuver to twist around and attach it once they are in. My elderly passengers ride with belt pulled behind their seats and reattached to the door by me once they are in and seated. I.e., no seat belt protection and a real pain in the neck. But I do not wish to have the belt disconnected since junior family members need it as is.

There should be a way of keeping the safety belt hooked up to the door when allowing a passenger to get into the back seat, because as it is now when you push the front seat forward with the safety belt still connected to the door, the door closes. And if you disconnect it from the door you have a tendency not to reconnect it.

Hook the middle of the belt (in front of chest) to the door or front of car and pull a nug to release (snap on). At present the belt makes it a little difficult to get out while holding things in the hands or arm.

The belt seems to pull quite hard against your body and this becomes annoying after a while. Suggest a clip like GM uses on their shoulder belt.

Ours doesn't always retract when we get out of the car. That could be improved.

On long trips the pressure of the belt on the shoulder can become almost painful. Also our belts are showing wear from the constant motion through the metal guide ring.

Take-up reel often doesn't work. Belt chafed against seat side back until it wore through vinyl covering.

Some sort of height adjustment to compensate for children or shorter people.

Tell me how I can start the car without the seat belt connected?

Retractor sticks frequently. Several problems with door fastener not making good contact, causing buzzer to sound and warning light to come on.

I would like to be able to start the car when the seat belts are disconnected.

Constricting the belt guide to prevent twisting, and the resultant binding, when door is closed and belt is reeled in. Remove ignition interlock circuitry.

None for improving the system but I have found that to those people who have never seen the restraint system in the Rabbit it completely baffles them when trying to get in the car -- they try to crawl under the belt, step over it, laugh at it and cannot figure out how to get in. I myself like the belt system very much. It poses a problem if you are trying to get out of the car when you have packages to carry into the house.

The retractor could be made to work more effectively, as occasionally upon opening the door the retractor will not release the belt causing the door to jerk away. Occasionally, too, the retractor will not rewind. I am worried about data on accidents in Rabbit on the driver's side. Does the seat belt being connected to the door cause a safety problem, especially when the driver's door is crushed, torn away, or jammed.

I would rather have the other type system with a lap belt and shoulder belt connected. Anyone serious about their safety will take the time to fasten a seat belt.

Eliminate buzzer. If retractor mechanism was on door instead of seat, then the belt wouldn't have to slide over your shoulder so much, which is a problem with bare skin and many materials. The major advantage of the automatic safety belt system is that you don't have to mess around with your seat before you start the car. However, my personal preference is still for a seat belt system which has no ignition interlock, and gives the driver the option to use the lap belt alone, or lap belt and shoulder belt, as circumstances warrant.

Pressure is too tight, scrapes shoulder when worn.

The passive restraint is great. The standard safety is awful on the Rabbit.

Couple a lap belt with the shoulder. Both left and right belts have failed on me. They do not lock when thrust against them. The shoulder belt should be removed from door as it inconveniences a person getting in or out with packages, baby, etc. I do not feel safe or protected with the present seat belt arrangement in the Rabbit.

This safety system can be a big hazard as the belt often catches when the door is shut and when you open the door it stops abruptly and can hit you in the head. I feel the single belt is not as safe -- I don't feel as secure as the one that has the double belt -- lap and shoulder.

I do not feel confident that it will lock up in the event of an accident. A quick jerk will not lock it. Repeated complaints to the dealer have had no effect. My Audi belts respond correctly to a sudden jerk.

Ease of entry is the biggest problem. Wearer comfort is better than any other system I have used. An adjustable detent might be nice to relieve the spring tension. It could be adjusted so that the belt would be loose with maybe 1/2" slack in belt.

Lessen tension on belt.

To me it works very well and see no reason for improvement. I never liked regular seat belts, but this I like.

Do not connect it to ignition.

Suggest similar system for rear passengers on four-door sedans, with passive restraint system. Also suggest changing reclining of front seats more to rear instead of so much forward movement.

Add a seat belt to the automatic shoulder harness. The under the dash knee padding is grossly, inadequate to prevent submarining.

Go back to the 1971 VW Beetle 3-point safety belt and locate the shoulder belt closer to the roof.

A lot of times when getting out of the car the belt gets caught on the edge of the seat at the point where the belt is first seen coming over the seat. It leaves slack in the belt and it gets caught in the door.

More substantial connection a door, mine has been torn up by people trying to take it loose, i.e., service station or car wash attendants. It tends to hang on pants, in your shirt pocket when opening door -- minor nuisance.

The belt wears out the seat where it rubs against the upholstery riding in and out of the retractor. The door mounted belt locks are too cheaply made. The ignition interlock should be discontinued. The system makes the back seat hard to reach.

Add a lap belt to the shoulder belt.

We've had a lot of trouble with the part connected to the door and have had new parts put in. They are awkward for people getting in and out, children with books, etc.

Would like a lap belt added to the "auto" system -- that the wearer must put on -- a more secure feeling than relying on the protective "shelf" under the dash.

Has been convenient and seems to work well.

I am 5'2 1/2". As a passenger your safety belt is comfortable at all times. But, when I drive I must have the seat as far forward as it will go. In the summer when I have no coat or sweater on, this causes the strap to rub on my neck. This is annoying and hurts. I have to tuck a handkerchief or scarf under it. Any suggestions?

I feel the safety belt to be very inconvenient in regard to persons that may be carrying parcels or objects, i.e., purses or packages. The belt usually prohibits easy accessibility to car and out of car.

Keep it from rubbing against neck by keeping it from retracting fully.

A stronger retractor, because when you close the door, the belts usually don't retract. They just hang there and get closed in the door.

It does wear down my suits -- maybe a smoother belt?

The whole Rabbit stinks. The seat belts probably work best of anything on the misfit lemon!

Possibly make the belt a little less tight while riding. Sometimes the belt is a nuisance when you lean forward.

Do away with it.

Disconnect them.

I can't suggest because we wouldn't use it any more.

It doesnot restrain.

(1) The inertia stop retractor system seems to be rather weak and subject to slippage. I've had one replaced already. (2) Since, in most films I've seen on test crashes, accidents, etc., the doors fly open on impact, a sure-fire safety lock system on the door would seem in order. If the doors fly open on impact, the automatic safety belt system would be totally ineffective.